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SERMONS

UPON

FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE

TOGETHER WITH

Horæ Homileticæ

BY

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Ὁ γὰρ καρπὸς τοῦ φωτὸς ἐν
πάσῃ ἀγαθωσύνῃ. — EPH. v. 9.

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD, AND COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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University Press:
John Wilson and Son, Cambridge.

TO

THE REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS, D.D.,

As a token of sincere respect this volume is inscribed by the Author.

PREFACE.

THE prospect is not exhilarating to him who puts forth a volume of sermons. Nobody reads sermons. A few copies sent to one's friends are sacredly preserved with uncut leaves. They disappear in the limbo of dead things. But this, though taken for granted, is not quite true of published sermons like those of Frederick W. Robertson and Phillips Brooks. Few volumes of an earnest sort are more read than these. And does any one read books that have nothing in them? Sermons must take their chance with essays, poems, histories, scientific works, and all other forms of literature. Yet it has been denied by critics that sermons deserve a place in literature at all; that their object is to move men to immediate action, and they have no relation to past or future, but only to the present. Having done their work they are, like spent shot, worthless. The feeling that produced them has passed away and cannot be repeated. But if music, which is feeling, can still awaken feeling, and

speech, which is thought, can still arouse thought, and motives which move the will can be brought to bear again and again on the mind to impel it to act, then sermons are not spent forces, but they gather up and conserve spiritual power for use. The very beginnings of the German language and literature were in the translations and homilies which Charlemagne caused to be made by the Church for the people. The sermons of the great English divines such as Wycliff, Latimer, Taylor, South, Hall, Robertson, Newman, and Liddon, if they were expunged from English literature, would cause an irreparable loss. Sermons occupy, it may be a small, but a high place in the house of literature, like the chapel through whose windows a celestial light shines. Sermons, even the humblest of them, speak to the ever-recurring wants and hopes of man, and to that which is divine in him. They have in them a breath of eternal life. Every true preacher has a new intuition of religion and Christianity. A sermon which is fit to be heard is fit to be read. The lightning may not strike in the same place, but from the same cloud may come forth electric power. A sincere word of God honestly spoken is never lost, and does not return entirely void to Him who sent it.

By way of introduction, I would speak briefly of a beloved teacher who was a representative of the

best Christian philosophy of Germany, of which Schleiermacher was the originator, though drawn perhaps more distantly from the older "Theologia Germanica," — a theology that approaches truth from the right side, from the side of God, one might say, apprehending divine things in the way in which they can alone be apprehended, not primarily through the understanding, which is a subordinate factor, but through the spiritual capacity, by the higher reason and discernment there are in faith, hope, and love; the theology of Saint John and Saint Paul, in which the freedom of the human will — a truth of priceless value and expressing one of the highest prerogatives in man — is not, after all, the fundamental axiom of theology, but rather the freedom of God's loving will is this; in which theory there is a large idea of God that is not based on the limitations of the human mind, or the conception, as it were, of a child, but which begins in God and ends in God, and whose language is, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Though sometimes forgetful of this divine philosophy and carried away by pride of opinion, I nevertheless obtained rest in this spiritual or divine

conception of Christianity, so that I have not been very seriously troubled by the changing phases of theological strife, the apparent antagonisms of reason and faith, the conflict between science and revelation, or "the discovery of the uniform laws of phenomena as disproving the supernatural facts of revelation," the progress of the higher criticism in its relation to inspiration, the bold yet believing speculations of the "new theology" following the track of Maurice and Robertson, the fresh redaction of the books of Scripture, nor the subtle speculations of modern materialistic philosophy; for I seem to have gained a foothold in spiritual truth firmer and farther in than these controversies reach. My obligations to Neander as a teacher, early begun, cannot be sufficiently acknowledged. It was in the last years of his life I attended his lectures, and was admitted to the more intimate home-circle of friends in which he was wont to meet his youthful disciples in a spirit of loving familiarity. He brought his pupils into a very close sympathy with himself, — into the true bond of Christian love. He gave them freely the results of his profoundest thinking. There was something, too, in the subjective character and richness of German thought, as contrasted with much of the barren metaphysics of the English inductive method, that attracted me. Since those

student years, the more careful reading of Neander's works strengthened in me the estimation which both he and Schleiermacher placed upon feeling and life in Christian philosophy, — that the Christian is he who has the spirit of Christ. All truth was centred in the divine person of Christ. From him a new life emanated and was communicated to men, not springing from human reason but from the "Spirit of Christ," — a supernatural power working in humanity through faith in Christ, not miraculously but naturally, as life works in the physical universe, and according to the conditions and laws of that divine life. The mystery and yet truth of this spiritual life in and through Christ, surpassing knowledge, as all that is divine does, powerfully impressed me; and it seemed to be the best existent expression of that Johannean theology in which the highest thought and truest love which there are in Christianity might find room.

Upon Neander, as a prepared instrument, the mind of Germany slowly revolved from almost utter negation into spiritual Christianity. He left his impress upon the thought not only of Germany but England and America, by introducing his philosophy, not antagonistically, but by indirection, and through a deeper interpretation of the divine will in the history and facts of human conscious-

ness. His was a philosophy of humanity as moulded through the ages under the silent shaping influences of the divine spirit. His own personal history was an epitome of the real history of the Christian church. Brought out of Judaism through Platonism he emerged into the clear light of spiritual Christianity, made more rich as well as more humble by his profound experience. His philosophy was essentially of the school of Plato, and, as to that, of Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling, — the ideal philosophy of a self-evidencing intuition or consciousness of truth dwelling in the "eternal idea," the pure reason, which in these philosophers, and especially in Kant, whose philosophy had so deep an ethical basis, came so near to the teachings of the New Testament, but which, in Neander, was transformed into and came to be identical with the real, the divine, and the divinely practical, by the power of faith in the Son and in the Spirit. He himself lived in the region of ideas, and in the contemplation of the love of God, and he was a very child in the wisdom of this world; yet his rare sagacity in divine things was so penetrating that, while unconscious of it, he became a guide and light to myriads of other seekers after truth.

To the few sermons that follow, intended not to provoke criticism but rather to provoke to good

works and faith, hope, and love, I have added, by way of appendix, under the title of "Horæ Homileticæ," some short articles, first published in the "Homiletic Review" during the years 1886 and 1887, and which are familiar answers to questions sent by young preachers; and this might be regarded by students as forming a supplement to a work entitled "Homiletics" published by me in 1881.

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I.

The Energy of Faith.

SERMONS.

I.

THE ENERGY OF FAITH.

But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. — JOHN v. 17.

THE most energetic thing in the world is faith. Coming from God it partakes of him. In contradiction to the Oriental idea that God exists in eternal calm, insensible to feeling and above the need of action, the words of the text — wonderful even as spoken by Christ, because they cast light into the depths of the divine nature — reveal the unresting activity of God, that the "Father worketh hitherto," or, literally, "even until now," and that there is a constant outflow of divine energy. The impulse which made the worlds did not exhaust creative energy.

On independent grounds science reaffirms the truth that there is in nature a force which, call it what you will, is ceaselessly active in evolving new results, in producing new forms of being, never

repeating itself and working toward a perfect end. I quote some words of a modern scientist: —

"When one has become, by a long study of nature, in some sense intimate with creation, it is impossible not to recognize in it the immediate action of thought, and even to specialize the intellectual faculties it reveals. It speaks of an infinite power of combination and analysis, of reminiscence and prophecy, of that which has been in eternal harmony with that which is to be; and while we stand in reverence before the grandeur of the creative conception as a whole, there breaks from it such lightness of fancy, such richness of invention, such variety and vividness of colour, that we lose our grasp of its completeness in wonder at its details, and our sense of its unity is clouded by its marvellous fertility. There may seem to be an irreverence in this characterizing the creative thought by epithets which we derive from the exercise of our own mental faculties; but it is nevertheless true that the nearer we come to nature, the more does it seem to us that all our intellectual endowments are merely the echo of the Almighty mind, and that the eternal archetypes of all manifestations of thought in man are found in the creation, of which he is the crowning work."

When we consider another feature of the divine activity, its universality, this appears as wonderful as its unresting character. Although God cannot be regarded as omnipresent in the sense of filling the universe with his presence, yet his spirit works

with forceful energy in every part, as if that were the only part where the Divine Power is active. There is no conceivable point of space where the living energy of God is not felt. But when we leave the natural world and come to the spiritual, the truth of the unresting and universal activity of God in the creation of new minds, that (whatever may be said of bodies) are not evolved by physical forces from material forms before existing, but are immaterial, original, and spiritual; when we know that these spirits are created and sustained by divine energy; when we think that upon these new minds are brought to bear influences which flow ceaselessly from God as ruler of a kingdom of spirit and sustainer of a divine life, — this truth, though harder to conceive, is more worthy of study. To renew a soul lying in the death of a sensual nature, and fit it to shine in the light of God's holy presence, what were the calling up out of chaos of a thousand material worlds to that! How the loving energies of God are concentrated upon that soul, — that chaos of spiritual being, — and how constant must be the personal care and thoughtful action of God, to bring this new-born and still imperfect soul, through the way of its freedom, being wrought upon by spiritual forces that are in accord with its nature and its peculiarities of personal experience, into final perfection!

Every such work has a varied richness of its own, and bears, like a work of art, the stamp of unity and originality. "Wondrous in working" must be the mind that is bringing by invisible but powerful methods, by the numberless subduing and shaping strokes of divine skill, this profound, unformed, and disorganized spiritual universe groaning and travailing together in pain while waiting for its redemption, into a new creation.

When we come to view the methods of the divine activity, while, of course, these are incomprehensible to us, yet we infer that God's activity is directed by infinite intelligence toward a purpose of goodness, and that it is upon a plan of absolute reason which sees the end from the beginning. Yet while God works thoughtfully, and in accordance with the laws of reason, we may suppose that he does not work laboriously; for the divine nature has no fatigue as a man has, no loss or waste of power, even as it is expressed in the words of an old French hymn, —

> "En peu d'heure
> Dieu labore," —

or, God works swiftly in no conceivable time. His work is not labour, which implies a fall, or a loss of original power; and there is doubtless a deep truth after all (when not carried to an extreme) in the Oriental idea of a central calm in

the nature of God; a windless and waveless ocean of peace, which is the true *Nirvana*, that is not annihilation but the perfection of conscious blessed life. Thus Christ said, in the controversy with the Jews about the Sabbath, that in God the deepest rest is not excluded by the highest activity. If this were not so, where would be the believer's hope of final rest from his toils in the bosom of God's eternal peace? Yet we should not carry this idea so far as to make God's activity to spring simply from the inherent necessity of His nature, that He must work simply because He is God, and not to spring from His will. There is an idea in this language — "My Father worketh hitherto and I work" — of the energetic putting forth of will-power; and just as any mind, made on the pattern of God's mind, works voluntarily for a good end, so does God. God works; Christ, who is the manifestation of the Father, works, — therefore we respect the worker. Christianity exalts work as a reflection of the activity of God. Work is divine. Whatever can be called a "work," which is an act of pure energy, is honourable. Setting aside even the end of the work, that may be good or bad, noble or selfish, we are attracted by a production of human energy, just as we are awed yet delighted before one of the works of the ancients which, like the original hills, time

has hardly touched. We are delighted because, though stupendous in material bulk, the work is an expression of spiritual force; it belongs to the spiritual and free part of man in opposition to the material, and to material obstacles, and is above the worth of the work itself. A man who has done a genuine work — who has built a house, painted a picture, constructed an argument, established an honest business, laid, or helped to lay, a railroad, reclaimed a tract of waste land — deserves honour; for he has asserted his worth as one who effects results; he has subdued nature by a spiritual force; he has shown a spark of that energy, that fiery particle, which is in and of God. Christianity recognizes the freedom of man to act, and the necessity of work; and although the work of the mind is, in some respects, nobler, as well as more difficult, than the work of the hands, yet there are few kinds of work that do not demand the co-operation of mind; and it is an unchristian sentiment, as well as one opposed to political science, and one which is showing itself in bitter conflicts between classes in society, like those representing labour and capital, that causes any good work, whether of the body or mind, to be held in disesteem. The deification of the intellectual, and the consequent degradation of the bodily nature, are both of them wrong; for the

world of spirit should come down into the world of sense to exalt and spiritualize it; and in like manner, on the other hand, mind can achieve no great work except on the basis of a sound body. There are some men who are not born to work in the world of pure intellect, who cannot live on books, but who are sent into the world to deal with the facts of nature, to fight with physical forces, to quarry the mines, to level the hills, to bridge the rivers, to till the earth, to fight the world's battles, and to do the world's business. The things of physical nature are also the expression of the creative love of God. God dwells in nature. There must be this material activity in any form of civilization before the immaterial creation can be reared upon it; or, to express it more correctly, the two must go together. The scholar should not hold in contempt the practical man, nor the practical man the scholar; but every man, thoroughly educated and developed in a perfect manhood, should, as far as possible, unite the two characters, even as in God the passive and active qualities, the contemplative and practical, are united in the highest measure. Christianity leaves no part unenergized. The love which seeks God springs from a divinely energized will. Work is the fruit of faith. Faith is the seed of a deified nature, of a new life in all the powers, that brings

them into healthful action; and when this awakening of the whole nature is accomplished, the end of the activity, like that of Christ, is good. The central motive of our Lord's human activity he declared to be the love of the Father, obedience to the will of the Father who sent him into the world to do an appointed work. He confessed himself to be so filled with that will that he would not call his work his own, but the Father's, who sent him. "The Father who dwelleth in me, He doeth the works;" and Christ made also another statement that we receive in silent faith: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." He who has been energized by faith, by that new spirit of life in Christ, could achieve Christ's spiritual works, his deeds of love; and every work which springs from this divine germ, whether it be great or small, must be Christlike. In their human brokenness such works are "good works," because they have their life-principle in Him who ever works that which is good; so that, not only outward works of benevolence, doing good to other men, but every act of love, every act of faith, every conquest of pride, temptation, passion, selfishness, hidden in one's own heart, is beautiful, because it springs from the love of God

that is in the innermost depths of the soul. These are the trees planted along the banks of the water of the River of Life, that blossom, scent the air, and bear all manner of fruit at all seasons, for the delight of the meek, and for the good pleasure of God. In some strange way in our Protestant theology the doctrine of "good works," of these genuine works of faith, which we find strewed through the Bible in their own right places and relations as plantings of God's hand, has somehow lost its glory and been obscured. Not that Protestant Christians do not abound in good works; but they do not recognize their divine beauty as fruits of the spirit, nor share their joy and delight, nor even perceive their absolute necessity, but throw contempt upon them, cover them up, and hardly suffer them to hold their place among the essential doctrines of Christianity. Yet there is a genuine Christian doctrine of "good works," as there is a doctrine of faith, and there is a noble Christian idea of work, that is derived from the Divine nature and example.

There may be drawn from this subject two or three lessons of a practical character.

1. To whatever work, in the good providence of God, we are called, and which itself is of a genuine nature, whether it be secular or religious, to that work, we should give, according to the measure of

strength allotted us, our real and undivided energies. Every one, in the first place, ought to try to do for his life-work that for which he is adapted, that which he can do best, and that which he loves to do best, — for then his heart will be in it, and he will be more likely to be a good workman. If it be practicable, we should thus give ourselves to some work in which we feel sympathetic interest and for which we are fitted. This is the work we can do. This is in the genial current of the nature. The poet Shelley could not master mathematics, but he could write poetry. De Ravignan, the orator of Nôtre Dame, could not make poetry, but he could preach with a masculine vigour. Having settled upon an occupation, whatever it be, if honest, we should give to it our best powers; for this is the life-work to which we are appointed, the way in which we are to manifest our character on this field of action, the world. One of the most brilliant of modern writers, to whom, if to any man, we are apt to ascribe genius that produces its results spontaneously and without labour, said of himself: "Whatever I have tried to do in life, I have tried with all my heart to do well. What I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely. Never to put one hand to anything on which I could throw my whole self, and never to affect depreciation of my work, what-

ever it was, I find now to have been my golden rule." Another great man has said, "What I have done has been done by days' works." But it is in the words of Christ that we find the divine expression of this principle of thoroughness, which is not only a golden rule of worldly success, but also a principle of religious duty: "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." Thus God works. He who rules the universe and decides the complex and eternal destinies of spirits, who holds in His hand the abysses of being and space and turns about the worlds without noise, looks to the minutest details. "Great in great things, greatest in least things" was Augustine's motto respecting God; but there are really no great or small works with Him; and whatever He does, is done with the whole mind and whole heart of God, and there are no imperfect divine works. In this, the human worker may learn to resemble God. This soundness in working should indeed be a religious principle. The principle of probity in work, if one drives a nail to do it thoroughly, should become a universal principle of action, should run through a man's life and all his works, even as the tide, when it comes in, not only fills the great gulfs and bays, but runs up into every creek and inlet, and penetrates and glorifies the whole land. Yet let me not

be understood as saying that this faithfulness in work should degenerate into a superficial, feverish, and vulgar activity, without intervals of repose, as Nature has. If men, if American workers, in all departments of life, should cultivate the passive virtues, and let nature and God sometimes work for them and in them by silence and contemplation, they would have deeper and sweeter natures; and in their apparent inaction the profound springs of thought and life, exhausted by constant drain upon them, would slowly fill up; as great men have had their Patmos, their Arabia, their Wartburg Castle, and have kept silent and nursed their thought in solitude, and have then come forth to do works that moved the world. Sometimes it is true "their strength is to sit still."

2. In all our work there should be found the higher spiritual motive and love as its impelling and inly sustaining source of activity, the faith that works by love. Are we not the sons of God? A monkish writer has said, "That which gives the only value to human actions is the will of God in them." They spring from the inner life. This spiritual purpose should strike through the whole constitution and activities of the being, even to the most insignificant act, doing all to the glory of God. The eternal life enters into it. If we

live humbly and lovingly in the divine will, as Christ lived, who did the works of his Father, and said that his works were not his but his Father's which sent him, it is not of great consequence what a man does, since the spirit in which he does his work glorifies it: "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." It is possible to serve God in any condition, and more than this, the love of God is consistent with the love of earthly things so far as they are innocent. But man, with limited powers, can, as a general rule, do but one thing, and let him do that divinely. Although joyfully recognizing the truth that there is a peculiar work for God that every Christian has to do, a labour in His vineyard and spiritual kingdom; and a mighty field of work it is to seek and save that which is lost, to make this sinful world, or that part of it which lies under the power of evil, better, happier, freer, and more divine, — a man's work truly; [1] yet the Christian need not divorce his common from his religious life. God puts us where he would have us be. Our life anywhere is His. God, if we would but see it, is in our common life, — His strength, glory and joy. Let us not dare to call anything common or unclean which He approves of or permits to be. Christ

[1] That thou therein do a knightly work. — *Luther's translation of* 1 *Tim. i.* 18.

proved his divinity in nothing more than in this, that he made to stand out in such fulness of light the truth "that all that is finite only needs the consecration of the infinite in order to be divine. He saw the universe in its true light." [1] He filled it with the Father's presence, activity, and love. Religion is the divine element in the ordinary things of life and in all things. It should not be narrowed down into an ecclesiastical form or theory separate from everything else, but should hallow all and work in all like the leaven. Sweep away selfish luxury and effeminacy and bring into our life a broader and higher idea of the love of God and man, and the land would be filled with simpler, manlier, and merrier men. Let the Christian word "service," come to the front! Let there be nothing in us that remains disunited from and opposed to God, but all—all be assimilated and harmonized to His purer service! It was Mr. Gladstone, I think, who said that "the belief of men, nowadays, had very little to do with their life, but that this belief was rather a matter of education and opinion." If this be so it bespeaks a deep insincerity, a spiritual corruption, and all the orthodoxy in the world cannot save it. One's belief should permeate and renew his life, in its every act and production, as the rain of heaven sinks into the

[1] Schleiermacher.

earth and moistens the roots of all things that spring up and grow: all will be the plants of a divine faith. A man need not seek any other vocation than the one he finds himself in, if a lawful one, in which to serve God. He need not build an altar to duty outside of the circle of his usual life, of his home, his daily pursuits, his aims, affections, walks, and studies. An artist may be a priest at the altar; so may a coal-heaver. A mechanic shows his Christianity better by thoroughly honest and faithful work than by the most beautiful prayers in the prayer-meeting; or, at all events, unfaithfulness in the line of ordinary daily work would be a greater proof of unchristian character than the omission of beautiful prayers. Having once given himself to God, all that one does, and all that emanates from the man, will bear the character of this spiritual consecration.

3. We should strive to do our work in this world well, in order to increase our working capacity, to develop our powers, to train ourselves for something higher to come, that we may be better fitted to serve Him who created us, each of us, for some good end. To fulfil the desire for self-completeness, to raise ourselves to the highest worth of being, to realize our own perfection. this indeed were motive enough to press us on in all good endeavour. Perfection is the aim of art. But what

were this, to the motive of rendering back to God, with usury, the mind that he has given us, and that He has redeemed by the sufferings of Christ from all evil; of presenting ourselves before Him, with our powers increased by activity, and saying: "Lord, Thou who ownest me altogether, use me in Thy heavenly service, as thou hast used me, even me, in my earthly life." If not thoughtful to work with this loving, prayerful, and immediate reference to God's praise, will, and judgment, rather than to human praise, our labour may become a selfish thing. We may labour for the meat that perisheth; and our proudest works, our most brilliant intellectual achievements, like "wood, hay, stubble," may be so thoroughly selfish that they shall not stand the test of the fire of the divine judgment, searching every man's work of what sort it is. As Christ came into the world to do genuine work, "not to be ministered unto but to minister," let every man, unworthy though he be, yet with cheerful hope, feel the responsibility of life, feel its joy and fear, and that he shall be judged by his works, "whether they be good, or whether they be evil." So our Lord told us, who also said, "Without Me, ye can do nothing." Let every man ask, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? Guide me by Thy good spirit into my true life-work! Cleanse me from sin and self-

seeking, that I may work for Thee! Accept me as an humble labourer and servant, in the name, and by the transforming faith of Thy son Jesus Christ, who is also my example in holy living and obedience! Enable me to devote my energies joyfully unto Thee! In the midst of the hardest labours life is worth living if the will of God is accomplished in us, and in what we are and do; and this life, there is no doubt of it, is an endless though noble struggle, a trial of the new-found spiritual strength in putting down antagonistic forces, and hastening the kingdom of good. Charles Kingsley said that "the best reward a man had in doing good work, is in having more work given him to do;" and I suppose he meant by this, that by doing something well a man proves himself able to do something better, and thus his energies seek room to develop, and instead of the few things, he finds himself ruler over many things, with his capacities enlarged for higher service, and thus he enters into the infinite work and joy of his Lord. Hope is the impelling power of Christian consciousness. The Christian looks forward not back. He forgets those things that are behind, their shortcomings and fragmentary fulfilments; he does not live in the imperfect Past to groan and lament over it, but in the active

Present and the still more life-full and perfect Future. The ages to come are his, and the eternities of being open to him, like triumphal arches one beyond another, their glorious hopes and possibilities.

II.

The Enlightening Quality of Faith.

II.

THE ENLIGHTENING QUALITY OF FAITH.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. — JOHN ix. 35-38.

IN this account of the blind man who was restored to sight we cannot but notice how rapidly his faith grew as soon as he came into personal contact with Christ. His faith, at first, was most crude though recognizing the truth to be in Jesus; soon however it was strong enough to acknowledge Jesus to be a good man; and yet, so genuine was it, so true was its source in the heart, that it was able, when the Saviour was fairly presented to him, to see in him "the Son of God," the manifestation of the Almighty Father, the divine object of confidence and source of spiritual life and light.

We cannot but observe also how marked is the contrast of this sincere and fast-growing faith of

a man of the people, and probably an illiterate man, whose eyes Christ had opened, with the darkness of mind of the educated Pharisees, who, vain of their knowledge, closed their eyes to the light, and through unbelief were smitten with blindness. While he was enlightened from the pure fount of light they were driven further and further away into the shadows of night. While he was gifted with penetration to see the Messiah, the anointed to save, they, who sat in Moses' seat to watch for his coming, did not perceive the signs of his presence, though the light shone around them, and though common minds, the ignorant, the blind, the leper, the publican, the vilest even, rejoiced in its rays. Declaring that the light was in them, and that they were the enlightened, the holy, the shrines of truth to whom men must come for light, they remained stricken with hopeless blindness. It was the light shining in darkness and the darkness comprehending it not.

I would speak to you upon the enlightening quality of faith as we see it set forth in the history of the blind man, brought to sight by Christ, and in all the instances where faith exerts its proper influence upon mind.

Faith is an enlightening as well as energizing principle; because it springs from the source of light, from an honest reception of divine truth,

thus kindling in the intellectual centre a light from the mind's enlightener, which dispels its natural darkness, awakes all the powers and produces a clarifying influence on the nature.

We see something of this enlightening power of faith in lower manifestations of the same vivifying principle. When Robert Stephenson, the English engineer, finished building the Tubular Bridge, the first of its kind, across the Menai Strait, at the public commemoration of this event he made a short address to the people, in the course of which he said that "he took little credit to himself for the work; for he felt that it was trust in a power out of himself that had carried him through the enterprise, that enabled him to overcome the immense difficulties of the undertaking, and that sometimes, he thought, inspired him with new thoughts and expedients when he was baffled and at his wit's end." Can we doubt that this assertion of the great mechanic had truth in it, even in respect of material things revealing an intuition of physical laws? What is called genius is a mind that God has made, and that is fired with a true and sometimes new thought that God has put in it. In the same way faith has done many wonderful works. It has won battles; it has written books; it has built buildings; it has sung poems; it has painted pictures; it has made

scientific discoveries. Faith in an idea has often filled the mind with an enthusiasm and a practical wisdom to carry out and establish that idea which has generated power sufficient to revolutionize states. We see this mingling of the enthusiast and the practical man in great historic characters, such, for instance, as Cromwell, and also, though a more phenomenal character, Mohammed, whose gigantic power is felt now in three continents coping with Christianity, and renewing itself, so that myriads are looking forward to a new Messiah, a "Mahdi," who, in the words of Mohammed, "will fill the world with justice as it is now filled with iniquity."

Faith in man or the teacher of any truth gives a penetration into his spirit and a comprehension of his ideas that nothing else can give. He who puts faith, for example, in a man like Coleridge, who believes in him and loves him, will come sooner than another would do at the heart of his teaching and the spirit of his philosophy; and it is profitable as well as delightful to talk with a hero-worshipper, an ardent believer in a great man, especially one about whom, like Coleridge, there is a difference of opinion; for the zealous disciple has, it is most likely, entered more sympathetically than other men into the genius of him upon whom the enthusiasm of his soul has fas-

tened, and studied him with keener insight; and, in like manner, one might say of men of science, like Darwin, Huxley, and Herbert Spencer, "Let me talk with those who believe in these teachers and heartily appreciate them and whatever of truth there be in them, in order to come at their opinions and understand them." Is it not so of the teacher Christ?

Not only does faith become an enlightening principle through firing the mind and arousing its powers to keener penetration, but also by purifying the moral nature, bringing its passionate impulses into controul, and holding in check every disturbing element. Mental darkness springs from moral weakness. It comes from want of a decided purpose. But when the will is roused to the attainment of some object of faith, then there is new light diffused through the mind, and the man seems to emerge from the cloudland of indolent fancies into the day of practical action. He is a dreamer no longer. He has earnestness and singleness of purpose. He is no more the plaything of passion, hunting shadows, and slave of his illusions; but he is master of himself, open-eyed, a fighter who sees his foes straight before him, who is not terrified by them, but who goes right on with an intelligent and growing boldness to the winning of his object however difficult. It has

often been noticed in regard to young men that there is a Hamlet-like period in their lives, — a halting and indecisive time, when the mind is unsatisfied and full of bitterness real or feigned; when the will is undecided because of this self-consciousness, or "conscience that makes cowards of us all." This irresoluteness must be overcome, and the man must advance to "a calmer state of insight where the reason shall have some mastery of the desires," before he will begin to work with a will, and with cheerful, steady patience, and before anything great may be hoped of him.

But it must be said that the enlightening power of faith is commensurate with the object of faith and does not go beyond the light contained in the object. If the object be small, its light is small and partial, perhaps false. If it be gold, the worshipper will have the light that comes from gold, — a golden light that fascinates and leads on thousands, as it led the fierce Spaniards to the conquest of a new world. If it be reputation, the seeker may obtain the brilliant light fame brings; if it be scholarly or scientific knowledge, he will have the higher and purer, though still earthly light that knowledge yields. But if the object of faith be the "Son of God," who is "the Light of the world," this man shall have light given him to see spiritual things; he shall be full of light, and

to him shall be revealed a new world of truth, — a world which, though it lies in and about us, is hid from the natural mind. "Spiritual things are spiritually discerned." For this the eye must be opened, or made to see. He who created light, and made also the eye, can alone adjust the one to the other, and can give the perceptive power to the organ, waking the dead mechanism to a living sense of sight and the glories and delights of vision. Dante when he enters the shadowy Inferno represents himself as having his eye opened by inward submission to the Truth, and hence he gets "infinitely beyond the wretched factions of Guelphs and Ghibellines of his time, and sees the roots of their sin and misery. The flaming realities of Eternity stand visible on every side of him, and teach him the straight way, and give him power to measure the dimensions of Popes and Cæsars, and estimate them by a true standard. And his earthly life, too, with all its sadness, has thereby become bright and clear and unspeakably precious." He sees earth and hell and heaven.

But more definitely, this higher faith in "the Son of God," to which the scriptural narrative of the blind man specially directs us, reveals to us, —

1. The new world of ourselves. Faith gives the knowledge of ourselves. It teaches us to estimate

human nature; to have right measures for men, society, character, success, life, death, and the future.

To see and know the physical world is a wonderful prerogative and privilege of mind; but a man may have read Nature with the eye of science, he may have had a thorough scientific culture, and yet he may know nothing of himself; and neither will his metaphysics — the reverse of the physical in thought — teach him self-knowledge. He may be still in the realm of the lower or of natural phenomena, while the originating forces are behind these, and are spiritual.

We should assuredly strive for knowledge, for all knowledge, since the most outward physical fact is related to the most inward spiritual truth; and we should not be satisfied with a narrow education, a partial culture (there is a great deal of nonsense spoken and written against culture), but should aim for the largest acquirements, and a range of vision which is able to take in the relations of all sciences. "There is no reason," says a vigorous writer, "why one who has a profound religious experience should therefore remain ignorant of the fact that the inclination of the earth's axis to the plane of its orbit is the cause of the change of the seasons." But let us know that in this knowledge if we are not opposed to we are

on the outside of truth still, and on the outside of ourselves, of the moral and spiritual world that stretches within and beyond. How little do men know of the depth and richness, the divine indwelling richness, and alas, the chaotic confusion often, of the inner world of their spirit, though made in the image of the divine!

The maxim of heathen antiquity "know thyself," while it expressed the highest point which heathen philosophy touched, was a confession of the consciousness of the loss of self-knowledge. We have, it is true, a faculty of knowledge, be it called reason, or conscience, by which we may apprehend truth, and especially that truth which relates to moral being. This is "the light that is in us." It is a sense divinely fitted to receive moral and spiritual truth, and it was made for so doing. "The end of all knowledge," Milton wrote, "is to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love Him, to imitate Him, to be like Him." Yet this knowing faculty, this intuitive apprehension, this natural eye, is clouded and darkened by the sensual mind and life, until it may be said to be blinded. The light that is in us becomes darkness, but even then the original organ of light is not destroyed; as the blind man in the miracle retained the organ of sight, he had the perfect eye, though it was closed, useless, filled

with darkness, until opened by Christ. Then for the first time that man saw his real self and his need of a spiritual helper, even as Christ spoke to this awakened consciousness of need in the question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Christ, who speaks to the moral perceptions and sensibilities, who opens the blind eye, could bring him to this self-knowledge. He reveals us to ourselves. He reveals to us our spiritual and divine nature that can be ministered to by the "Son of God." He lights up our inner being and causes us to see its character, so that if we have heretofore cherished false views of ourselves and our goodness, they give way before the clear light of his spirit. His spirit searches the deep things of the spirit, its capacities for good and evil. Christ's law is laid upon spirit. "My kingdom is within you." His law of obedience is in the spiritual affection more than in "the form of godliness." We may keep the decalogue, yet if the love of God be absent, break every law. We talk of the duty of temperance, a great duty; but a man may be a temperate man and total abstainer, and yet he may at the same time nourish those intemperate wishes, inordinate affections, envious feelings, lustings after applause and power, and those covetous desires that show the unchastened and unspiritual mind, and this truth the spirit of

Christ searches out and brings to light. One may not go to his neighbour's house and steal, he may not swindle his neighbour out of his property, but he may at the same time take from, and profoundly wrong his neighbour by unjust and unkind words, and by more unkind thoughts. He may wantonly and wickedly break the law of love, which infraction of the highest law is a condemning sin, as well as the sin of dishonesty. In his treatment of others one may even manifest extreme outward courtesy and a lively show of personal friendship, and, after all, love only himself, and live only for himself, and nurses, in his inmost heart a contempt for his fellow-men, the spirit of invincible pride toward God and man; and this, Christ, when he pours light into the soul, reveals to a man and makes him humble.

Christ required of the young man who desired to become his disciple to do but one act of honest self-denial, and a touch developed the secret love of "this present evil world" and the unchanged and unspiritual state of his mind; he turned from following Christ "for he had great possessions." How different the case of St. Francis of Assisi, in the thirteenth century, who, a wealthy and popular young man, as he heard the call of Christ "Forsake all that thou hast and follow me," obeyed the call literally, stripped off his silken garments, gave

up his large property and devoted himself to poverty and preaching the Word, so that when we hear afterwards of his seeing deeply into spiritual things, glories, and joys, and of having visions of the Lord Christ, we should not be too hasty to put it all down to superstition and a heated fancy! This inward revelation of Christ makes known to us that sometimes we are not what we even seem to be. It slays our conceit. It brings down high thoughts. It reveals selfishness. It is a work of levelling before that of building; and yet to carry out this, the work of self-humiliation must be thoroughly done, and it is thoroughly done in man whenever Christ's spirit reveals him to himself. That spirit makes him sorrowfully but sincerely acknowledge the evil that is in him, that he is a sinful man, that he does not do even his duty from the love of God, that by the spiritual law of Christ he is condemned, and that to inherit eternal life he must be entirely "renewed in the spirit of his mind."

2. Faith in the Son of God opens to the mind, blinded by its sin, the new way of purity and life. It reveals the love of God as well as the enmity and sin of man. "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." Having shown us the human unrighteousness, Christ then shows the way of restoration in the righteousness of God.

How different was this teacher from those whose genius is keen to detect the diseases of human nature, who have the satirical and critical power developed, like many reformers of the present day, but who are able to minister no medicine to minds diseased, no drug potent enough to bring to them new life, — men who are skilful in using the dissecting knife, but incapable of checking the progress of the malady! There was once, and not long ago, a man in Europe whose name will occur to you, whose long life, like that of *Teiresias*, the seer, stretched over the last half of one century and almost over the first half of another, and who filled that whole period with the splendour of his intellectual light, who was the wisest man in human wisdom and subtlest in discernment of the age, or of almost any age, — the compendium of a world; a man of unsurpassed breadth of intellect, who could write with impassive mind a poem that would make others weep: —

> "He took the suffering human race,
> He read each wound, each weakness clear,
> He laid his hand upon the place
> And said, 'Thou ailest here and here.'"

Deep was his knowledge of Nature, and profoundly did he read man, but it was not from Nature that he could draw life and healing for the wounded spirit; and this priest of Nature,

as he himself confessed by his witty irony and apathetic indifference, passed by on the other side. But the "teacher sent from God" does not abandon the soul to whom he has shown its deadly wound. There is no devilish laugh heard over the fall of the pure. He does not mock human misery. He does not leave the sufferer in his sorrow. He sought the man who was excommunicated by men and cast out of the synagogue and pronounced morally incurable, and healed him. He never fails in tenderest sympathy in the time of need, when all human aid forsakes and the soul is left alone in its sorrow. He not only knows men infinitely better than Shakspeare or Goethe or Browning, or the most subtle poetic genius, but he loves them. He reveals to the dark and anguished spirit the love of God. He reveals the Father, the Father willing to forgive, desiring that none should perish in spiritual darkness, suffering for the loss of any of His children and yearning over them with infinite compassion, — even the inmost nature of God, His love, as a shoreless sea flowing around and embracing all his creatures, higher than their thought and deeper than their sin.

"In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him."

Christ reveals the love of God by his sacrifice; and what was that sacrifice? The Son of God was crucified between two thieves, and heaven was darkened and the veil of the temple was rent, which was the outer, visible sacrifice ; but the inner, invisible and spiritual sacrifice of divine love, can it be known? We should believe on him because he reveals to us not only what our hearts confirm of the sin of man and the love of God, but what our hearts tell us love will do. Love is sacrifice. Where was there ever love where there was not sacrifice for the object of love? Wherever the altar of love is built there the flame of sacrifice ascends. From mother-heart down, the world is full of love's vicarious quality, and love is always giving its life. God has made this law of sacrifice the law of life, that out of death springs life, that "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, for if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." He has mysteriously submitted Himself to this law of sacrifice. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, just for unjust, that he might bring us to God," that, giving his life for us freely, we might receive this spirit of life and love into ourselves and live the eternal life. Faith does not create this sacrifice but reveals it. It is only opening the eye to see what God has done for us, to see God and how infinite He is in His love.

The eye is opened, it receives the light of that heavenly truth and acts upon it.

The man who believes, to him eternal life is opened, and he sees his divine inheritance, and the bright and lofty things God means for him in His loving will. He wins the great vision of God. How many hearts in every age of the world since Christ died have given their testimony to this, which has become what has been called the Christian consciousness of the world! Upon the reception of Christ as "the Son of God," by faith, there comes into the mind a sense of reconciliation, of divine peace flowing from real union with God, — the "sweetness and light" not of culture but of a holy mind.

Christ throws light upon the deepest, most awful, most tender, most joyful, most spiritual relations of God to the soul. He makes plain as a shaft of light the way of the soul's return to God, so that no one need miss it and thus enter into God's life. By the way of the heart, by the way of faith, by the way of love, by confessing truly from the heart "Lord I believe,"— in this way, your soul and mine may find eternal life, and may find it in this life; for the vital principle of Christian life, above dogmas, is living in Christ by faith and love; Christ not only reveals a new life but he is that life, that spirit in us. The essential

reality of Christ's salvation consists in our appropriation of his spirit, in realizing his spiritual life, in having his character, in becoming ourselves a part and portion of his divine goodness.

Christ's human life was exceptional in its perfection, but not exceptional in its spirit, and we too may share it. We may have "the same mind that was in Christ." We may come up into that human divine life which he lived, and which he still lives, being made one with Him in all things, in the spirit. Wherever in religion or the theology of Christianity we have doubt and trouble, here is the essence of Christianity, — to believe that the divine becomes human and the human divine in Christ, and thus believing, to live a life in the spirit of Christ. If then we be risen with Christ, let us seek those things that are above and that belong to the higher spiritual life, the faith, hope, and love of the gospel; its gladness, purity, and peace; its courageous and childlike spirit; its lofty aim; its willing self-sacrifice; its sweet contentment; its loving brotherhood; its meekness, greatness, goodness, and light.

And if there be a soul that feels no desire for this "light of life," lying in the darkness of this world and of a sensual life, and sinking every day deeper into the death of selfishness, Thou compassionate One, who didst open the blind man's

eyes and pour on his dark mind the cheering light, let this one feel thy healing touch, and hear thy re-creating voice, saying, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and I will give thee light!"

III.

Faith's Increase.

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FAITH'S INCREASE.

For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. — MATT. xxv. 29.

"THAT which he hath," — what meaning do you attach to these words? If you are like myself, you have read them a hundred times when they have seemed weighty like the words of our Lord, but without conveying a clear idea, or an idea that has been clearly analyzed. They were spoken at the conclusion of the parable of the talents, but as they were also uttered at other times, and in other relations, they seem to have been a condensed expression of truth of wide application, so that the words (if we can come at their meaning) form one of those deep sayings of Christ which run under life, and contain a foundation principle of God's kingdom.

In Matt. xiii. 12 the same words stand in connection, not with the parable of the talents, but with the parable of the sower, and have an application to the method of teaching by parables, or

to the revealing and concealing properties of parable-teaching, namely, that "he who hath," or he who understands with the heart as well as hears with the ear, has more of divine truth given him, and sees deeper than other men into the parable, or dark saying, while "he who hath not," or he in whom there is no spark of spiritual desire, nor meetness to receive the word, has taken away from him all the benefits of heavenly instruction, and even "that which he hath;" and, like a lightning flash which dazzles the eye, the darkness is darker than before; even as the scribes and Pharisees were blinded by the lightning of Christ's word and wandered in outer darkness, while many an humble man welcomed it as the manifestation of God's wisdom and love, and as the word of eternal life to his soul.

In the parable of the talents with which the text is connected, the salient feature, and that on which the parable turns, is "the slothful servant," since he is the one to whom the words apply "but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." That is to say, that "he that hath not" is he who holds his talent as if he had it not, not having it because not using it. He who went and hid his talent in the earth did not have it; for in order to have a good as a possession we must make that use of it which its nature requires,

else it vanishes like an unsubstantial sceptre from our grasp; as a rich but unlearned man, may have his library filled with good books containing all the learning of ages, yet he cannot be called their owner so truly as the poor scholar who arranges them on the shelves and knows something of their contents.

The slothful servant, whose portrait our Lord paints in a few strokes, was the portrait of a peculiar but not altogether uncommon type of man. He is not only spoken of as a "slothful" but as a "wicked" or false servant. His receiving of his one talent was but an apparent receiving after all, and his bitter words, "Lo, there thou hast that is thine," showed that he had not really accepted the gift, that he had only seemed to receive it, and that he never truly had it. It was a dead gift. He never possessed it through his despising and neglecting it. He scorned it. He typifies the cold egoism of those persons who do not in their heart of hearts accept the Christ, God's gift to humanity, — "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sin;" and who are so bound up in self-love that they do not feel the need of the love of God. There was a heartless indifference about this man, an Iago-like spirit devoid of sincerity and gratitude, as well as a

slavish fear of his Lord, that stamps him as one still unreceptive of the divine gift, and who was inly compelled to step out of the place which he failed to improve, and where his heart never was, and to surrender his gift to another, perhaps a man who had five or ten talents, yet who was humble in spirit, and who showed a genuine willingness to receive and use the gift for his Lord's glory.

It is perfectly right, however, to take the words of the text out of their special connection with the parable of the talents, because our Lord himself does the same, though not ever losing sight of the parable's teaching, which goes deep into life and its success or failure, and to look at the more comprehensive and profound sense of the aphorism.

The parables of Christ may be unlocked by the golden key of "the kingdom of God;" and they were spoken to set forth to minds that truly comprehend them, the deepest laws of that kingdom; so that in this saying of Christ, impressively uttered at different periods of his life, we may perceive a law of his spiritual kingdom, namely, that the real reception in the soul, by faith, of the heavenly gift, is the secret of spiritual life and of spiritual increase.

The words "for unto every one that hath" may signify the man of faith, or he who is receptive of

what is divinely given him, and who has thus obtained some actual possession of spiritual things; since faith is a divine endowment of the soul, whereby it knows and acquires something of God.

Here then is the law of spiritual acquirement and growth. From the nature of faith there is in it a principle of increase in all the possessions of the soul, or in spiritual character, good, happiness, and perfection. There is a growth in grace and in the knowledge of God, but a beginning of all this is gained in the act of faith.

Whatever implies growth, power, development of any kind, in the natural and intellectual as well as the spiritual world, must have something positive to start from. The physical universe, in its order and perfection, was developed from the creation of matter in a germinal form; and from this elementary principle of matter, call it what you will, come all the forms of organized material existence; and in like manner, the great systems of science, which constitute the world's wisdom, depend upon and spring from the simple faculty of knowledge implanted in man, together with the material of truth for this knowing capacity and desire to work upon; so the production of the works of art, even the greatest, find their necessary basis in the intuitive sense of beauty in the human mind.

In like manner in the world's business, there must be a nucleus, a starting point of capital, however attained and however small, even for material wealth to roll up and accumulate. We read the story of Stephen Girard's selling his box of matches in the streets of Philadelphia, and that this was the beginning of his immense property, which story crudely illustrates our meaning, for it gave the young Girard a standing-place in the money market.

In spiritual things this beginning, this starting point, this crystallizing focus out of the chaos, this germinating principle of life and growth, is the possession of faith, it may be as a grain of mustard seed. "To every one that hath," to every one that hath this divine gift, this real possession, more of all things that are spiritual and divine shall be given, and "he shall have abundance," in fact, limitless possession, for faith is eternal life in germ; it is potential of things divine; it is "the substance" (substantial possession) "of things hoped for;" and the heavenly treasure (heaven itself), with its unspeakable glories and joys, is not really some addition to, but the more perfect development of, what is, in this life, already the believer's own; for in the love of Christ is the capacity and reality of heaven.

Let us hear this old gospel of faith, and leaving

other ways of human perfectibility, be they ethical or philosophical, like modern Comtism, out of sight for a moment, let us listen to the divine voice which sounds through the ages from Abraham's time to our own, repeated by the apostle Paul, re-echoed by every man who ever entered, though fighting and faint, into the kingdom of God, "By faith are ye saved, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," and "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Faith grasps this great salvation. Faith is the consciousness of the divine; faith possesses God, and thus comprehends the possibility and promise of spiritual life, and of every holy and heavenly possession.

I will try to give a few reasons for this. It is seen first, from the fact of union, or the fact that faith, looking at its divine side, is an energizing from above of the dead and sinful soul, which enables it to rise from its sleep of sin and to join itself upon God, the spring of spiritual life, and thus to come unto His unity which embraces all. It is the Spirit's uniting act, or gift of power, which engrafts the branch, the wild and corrupt branch, upon the Vine, Christ Jesus, whereby the spiritual life is henceforth drawn from divine sources, and grows by a living principle of union with Christ, who is the life; it lives because Christ lives in it, and imparts to it its principle of spiritual growth.

It is seen, secondly, from the fact of reception, or, because faith, looking at it from its human side, is, peculiarly and above all, the receptive principle, or the human desire and want which is felt to have and to be filled with what God can give it; and thus the faith itself is planted in the human desire to have and to know more of God. It is receptive of God and his spiritual gifts. Faith thus planted in a rich soil, and itself being made willing or ready to receive, and capable of receiving all it can possess of God, must therefore increase, because that which it grows upon, or draws from, is infinite.

It is seen, thirdly, from the fact of perfection, or because faith aims at the standard of divine perfection in character and life. As it is a divine gift it takes its standard from the giver, rather than the receiver; it exchanges a human for a divine ideal; it is satisfied with nothing under the heavenly ideal. "Be ye perfect even as I am perfect." The more a soul longs for the perfection of God, the more God opens to it the riches of his perfect wisdom, goodness, and love; for, to the soul that gives itself to God, to it God gives himself in his fulness; so that we should not stint ourselves by human views, but should enter by faith into the immeasurable largeness of the giver, and being "rooted and grounded in love, know

something of the length and breadth, the height and depth, and comprehend the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God." How the apostle Peter in his setting forth of the marvellous climax of the Christian life, seems to climb up into the atmosphere of heavenly things, beginning as he does down at the foot of the mountain of faith, reaching one great terrace after another that lift themselves like altar-steps, sloping upward and ending in the divine love, as if nothing were above this, and the infinite blue were bended over all. "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity," for he could go no higher; but the beginning of all this divine and infinite series of development in the perfect life, was faith. Literally rendered the passage is, "See that your faith develops itself in virtue, and virtue develops itself in knowledge," and so on; each attainment being organically involved in the other preceding attainments (for what is evolved must first be involved), but all contained, as it were, in the faith-cell, — a theory of evolution scripturally and spiritually true, for the infinite germ of all godlikeness, progress, and perfection, is implanted in the soul that once unites itself to Christ by faith!

And, lastly, this is seen by action, or because faith, like the faithful servant in the parable, is itself an active principle which is ever diligently putting out to usury the talents it receives; thus gaining other talents, and by using what it started with well, is constantly rolling up capital. Faith comprehends the economies of a holy and rich life. The benevolent man, whose life is faith in action, grows still more capable of benevolent activity, and by giving finds it easy to give. He uses the love God has put in his heart, and, as his power of loving grows, he discovers a hundred ways and opportunities of doing good that ordinary men know nothing of. His work grows on his hands. The work of Immanuel Wichern, of Hamburg, the humble founder of the "Rough House" reformatory school of Germany, is an example of this law of increase. This plan, conceived by a poor man in self-denying faith, for reclaiming the abandoned classes of the great city of Hamburg, on the simple Christian principle of trusting and loving them, very much upon the plan of the late Mr. Charles Brace's "Five Points Mission," only more radical and extensive, and very obscure at first, a grain of mustard seed, has grown into an imperial benevolence extending not only over Germany but shooting its branches over all Europe, and, one might say, the world. In a

still more spiritual conception of faith, he who uses the gift of prayer, which is faith in its purest exercise, who daily prays to his Father who is in secret, grows in intimate communion with God, and becomes a prince in the spiritual realm, setting in movement, by a breath, supernatural forces, and whose whole life is an act of prayer or praise.

Spiritual growth is both passive and active ; it receives and it uses what it receives. This co-operation of divine and human energies, where it exists, results in advancement all along the line of holy activity and growth, extending into the future and unseen. The poet Tennyson, in his poem on "Wages," asks for Virtue "Give her the glory of going on and not to die." This is another way of putting the Biblical truth, that those who have wrought well here, shall be the possessors of many talents and rulers over many cities. It implies that work done here bears a relation to more pure and glorious work hereafter, and that the powers of the soul will find their full scope in eternity. Thus in all situations in this life, however narrow and hard, however hemmed in by affliction and trouble, faith will find the way to make progress, to enlarge its sphere of activity, to grow constantly in grace and in the knowledge of God, as the noblest forest tree in the world, the Italian pine, springs strong and vigorous, towering into

heaven with its massive chambers of dark foliage, from the very crevices of the rock.

But we have thus far looked only at the bright side of the Lord's words, while there is, also, another side as correspondingly dark, which is the antithesis of faith, and of its joyful advance in spiritual life, hope, and all good; if the sunshine sleeps in it, so does the thunder.

Faith, and faith only, unites the soul to God in an ever-advancing life in Him, while, in like manner, alas, unbelief separates the soul from God, leading to the wasting of the powers of life. "But from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." As in God, and in that joyous divine atmosphere of life and hope which is in Him, all good things blossom and flourish, so away from God all good things wither and die. As in the nature of faith there is a principle of living increase, so in the nature of unbelief, which is a state of mind unreceptive of God and His gift, there is the working of a law of constant diminution in the soul's original possessions. The native powers of the intellect can expand to their utmost only in the air of truth, love, and obedience. The agitating influence of evil passions and error disturbs the healthy working of the mental faculties; and the older a man grows, if a bad man, the more rapidly his moral nature deteriorates, and

pulls down with it his intellectual nature. How sudden and rapid after they had reached a certain point, has been the fall of the great bad men of history! The emperor Tiberius was not an ordinary man in sagacity, he was in fact one of the ablest of the emperors; but he writes to the Roman Senate from the island of Capreæ, the home of his incredible debaucheries, that "what to write or not to write, may all the gods and goddesses torment me more than I am daily suffering, if I do know;" as if he already felt the inevitable certainty and swiftness of his plunge into moral destruction.

After the first unsatisfying and embittering experiences of evil there is not enough left in evil to attract, or to impel, the whole mind, as it is impelled by a great motive, or, by a great ideal, like the love of God; and the mind turns in upon itself; the will spends itself in efforts at self-impulsion; the reasoning powers hang suspended over some impotent conclusion or sophism, that proves nothing, and that brings no result worthy of the intellect.

Above all, the spiritual powers and gifts which belong to man's higher nature, and which are given as the continual dew of heavenly grace to the soul from the hand of the Father, the inborn desires reaching out to Him, the messages of higher

life and hope that come to every one, the blessed kingdom of God dwelling with men, Christ's divine love for humanity and his blood shed for all, the living influences of the Spirit immanent and ever-working in every spirit — these, to the man not receiving and using them by faith, obedience, and love, are quenched in his dulling heart, as the lights go out one by one in a great cathedral dedicated to God, and where His praises have been sung, and it becomes a cold and gloomy void. One sees sometimes such totally desecrated churches in Europe. The gifts are "taken away" from him not valuing nor receiving them, and the unprofitable servant wastes and consumes his divine birthright.

So the last thought which I draw from this theme is necessarily a sad one, and full of admonition especially to those who have not yet received Christ simply and joyfully by faith, as he offers himself in the gospel. The conditions of God are small, and in one sense, easy, but they are needful conditions of the new life; they are so in the nature of things. The mind is made that it craves perfection. All thinkers admit that man cannot be explained without God. Human nature finds its ideal, its completion, in God. Faith is the yearning after this perfection in the divine image and conception. The lack of the

possession of faith, or total unbelief, quenches these higher aspirations, bars the door to the all-free gifts of God, takes away the native magnificent possessions of the mind, and is man's essential poverty. "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

IV.

Faith's Lesson.

IV.

FAITH'S LESSON.

For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. — PHIL. iv. 11, part of verse.

IN what way the apostle learned the rare lesson of contentment, every man who is seeking for a free mind (which is the source and end of true philosophy) would wish to know.

He did not seem to have learned it from his theological instructors in Jerusalem (so queenly a science as theology is) for he was tormented by a fierce spirit while sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, starting up at times to hale innocent men and women to prison because they differed with him in matters of belief: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the chief priest, and desired of him letters unto Damascus, to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem;" and it was upon this journey to Damascus, in obedience to his theological zeal, that the gentleness of Christ fell upon him and took him captive.

Neither did he appear to have caught the spirit of contentment from his classical teachers, in Tarsus, from whom he acquired Greek culture, and some excellent things that he made good use of, but from whom he gained also a knowledge of the multiplicity of questions, vexing the mind, that the thinkers of antiquity had started but left unsettled. The apostle had somehow won this wisdom from a higher source, since few, if any, before him, in the ancient days, gave such testimony to a real contentment.

If we should ask in earnest concerning the way in which this lesson was acquired by a man of like passions with ourselves and partaking of the same changeful life, one filled with profound changes (for he wrote these words while prisoner in Nero's implacable hands awaiting the probable fatal issue of his trial), we must look at the ground of discontent in the human mind; of that disquietude which never has seemed more aggravated than when, in these late Christian days, the spirit of pessimism is pervading thought, and it is declared that life is evil, that this life in will and idea is the worst possible, that happiness, in any form, has not been and never will be obtained, either by the individual man or the world; and this is made an open philosophy of life. But it may be affirmed — and none but the disciples of the pessi-

mistic philosophy would deny it — that the mind was meant for better things than to live in discontent ending in despair. It was made for enjoying itself, like other creatures of God, in the free exercise of its powers in harmony with the loving divine will. "The soul," in the oft-quoted words of St. Augustine, "was made for God, and it always will be restless until it returns to Him." The soul turns ever to God to find its rest. Even in suffering it finds hope in God. Man, regarded from a philosophic point of view, is imperfect without God. His is a dependent child-spirit that cannot become independent of God. God enters into its inmost parts and relations; He knows thoroughly the work of His hands; He formed the human mind upon the image of the divine; He gave it its principles and ideals in His own nature; He sustains its energies of will and action; He conferred the powers of thought that reach to Him, and the affections that find their capacity of loving met only in Him; He made man to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" even when unrighteous, so that nothing can fully satisfy and complete him lower than the knowledge, righteousness, and love of God.

But the mind, created in its powers and affections to live and move and have its being in God, to delight ever in Him, may, as free, by a simple

act of disobedience put itself in antagonism to the Lord of its life. Man may deny God and cast off the recognition of Him and of His right in him. He may break out of His unity of love. "Sin," the apostle says, "is the transgression of the law;" the inner law of righteousness written in the mind and made consciously part of its child-nature. Sin thus becomes a divisive element. It breaks the happy union with God, and plants a discordant principle in the heart; and here have we not a glimpse of the profound source of human discontent, that it is not conditioned upon outward states of being, but is spiritual, and lies in the soul's alienation from its true life? If thus inner and spiritual, may we not see the way back to peace by this hidden pathway? — that when the broken bond is reunited and the spirit is brought into willing obedience of the living God, then from the nature of the soul, it finds life and peace; and a peace springing from such a source, wrought in the soul and proceeding from the readjustment of its profoundest nature with the divine law of its nature, no outer thing can touch it, no change of condition affect it.

A serious mistake (arising from wrong teaching) is made by those who suppose that the soul comes into a state of unfreedom, or of unhappy bondage, by submitting itself to the law of God, so that re-

ligion is an unnatural thing; for, on the contrary, this is the first moment of its real freedom when it is released from the tyranny of things out of the soul, of time and sense, and becomes, what it was made to be, joyfully one with the highest law of its being, in union with that spirit in whom it finds the perfection of its powers. Love has unity. The want of it creates division. In fact, the difficulty of the age is its setting up of God's creature, humanity, in God's place, who is the sun, the centre, so that the mind loses its own centre, its support, its divine life, and droops and dies like a plant cut up from its root. Speaking of the phase of the irreligion of the times, an English writer says: —

"One of the causes which indisposes the mind to the perfect obedience of God may be described as the spirit of an intellectual selfishness, which makes man and not God the centre of the world of thought. Man is again to be, as of old with the Greek sophist, the measure of all things. God is but a point on the extreme circumference of his creature's thought. Nay more, in its more developed form this temper makes God Himself a pure creature of the thought of His creature, and by doing so it at length denies His real existence. But even where it stops very far short of this culminating wrong, it accustoms men to see in religious truth the colourings or productions of the human mind so exclusively, as to eat out the very heart of true religious life. For men can no more worship that which we deem to be a creature

of our own or of another man's mind, than we can knowingly worship the carved and painted workmanship of human hands."

How true is this! There is really but one truth; God — going around phenomena; and all truths are but fragments of this truth. God, so rich in goodness, and in every perfection that man was made for and craves for his highest life, gives Himself freely to the mind that gives itself freely to Him; and, until a man has made an unconditional surrender of himself to God, which is his reasonable (spiritual) service, he cannot have happiness in himself. "Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace." "That in me ye might have peace," Christ said, through whom this spiritual reconciliation is effected, and by whom the human and divine are made one, which is the mystery of faith. The apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "for through Him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father;" and here is doubtless the open secret of the apostle's contentment which nothing could disturb or overthrow. Centred in love, he could write such a divine chapter as the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. By coming to know Christ he found the way of union with God, and received that gift of peace which enters into the peace of God.

It is, however, worthy of notice, that the apostle, in the text, speaks of his having *learned* this contentment, as if it were something of a personal acquisition, and that all Christians had not yet acquired it. "For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

While contentment is a spiritual gift, and comes through deliverance of the soul from the tyranny of sin, and its reconciliation with God, while this is its only foundation, yet it did not seem to have been at first entirely possessed even by the apostle; but he learned it; he underwent instruction in Christ's school, in whose hands as a teacher he put himself, and who taught him, by every method, to come into this heavenly wisdom.

"Contentment" by its etymology and in the orignal means that which is equivalent to "self-contained," or the power to controul one's self, — that power which springs from the bringing under of the selfish nature, and which is taught in the school of Divine Love, — a hard master, sometimes, we think, and the lesson of contentment is a difficult one to learn, as each of us knows. One of Charles Kingsley's books, which for a wonder has little else in it of worth, has this thought, that a man is not perfect until he is able to do what he does not want to do; or until he has got the mastery over himself so as to do this; wherefore

it is not to be taken for granted, that all Christians can make the apostolic declaration of having learned the lesson of contentment, or self-containment; for if this were true, Christians would be happier people than they appear to be.

How frequently it happens, that when one imagines he has come to a free mind, and has yielded up all to God, and is depending on divine power for peace, he may be depending for happiness, after all, on things other than God, — upon his success in a lower object of life; upon his completing some work; his winning some prize; perhaps, on his change of abode from one town, or continent, to another, or some agreeable outward surroundings and social relations; on human friendship and not on Christ's friendship; on human praise and not the praise of Him who is the true judge of actions, for the basis of peace must be divine; else, were these objects removed, where is he? Is he self-centred? If he lose the good speeches of men and grow unpopular, if he be forced to meet the obscure struggles of poverty, if health breaks down, if domestic cares overtake him, if friends leave him, and if all that gives zest to life — all in the outward state that is happiness-bringing — be taken away, will he have peace, and be able to say, —

"My mind to me a kingdom is?"

If this lesson of contentment, therefore, in order to be learned, is to be learned by each man through his personal experience of spiritual things and the teaching of Christ, I would suggest one or two simple ways by which the believing soul may find out how to increase its contentment and to deepen the peace that springs from a higher source than the world.

I would mention, first, the cultivation of a trustful spirit; of a habit of resting in all things, whether great or small, temporal or spiritual, on the will of God as something solid and abiding; and why should we not do this?

> "We have but faith; we cannot know,
> For knowledge is of things we see."

Having yielded himself to God, having come into union with God in Christ, let one seek, by a constant habit of trusting God, to deepen the union, to be more and more "hid with Christ in God;" and when the human will learns to come into harmony with the divine, its restless longings grow still. As in the woods we follow down a stream that comes leaping from the hills, tormenting itself among roots and rocks, and fretting its way along in confined channels, growing more and more restless, and then we see how calm it suddenly becomes at the moment when it touches the great river; and so, too, when a soul, emerging from

the narrow channel of a selfish life, meets the deep current of the divine will (the river of eternal righteousness), and blends with it, then something of a divine tranquillity enters life, and nothing can greatly disturb its contentment. The more of God in a life the more strength. Macaulay wrote of Milton, "Neither blindness, nor age, nor gout, nor penury, nor domestic afflictions, nor political disappointments, nor abuse, nor proscription, nor neglect, had power to disturb his sedate and majestic patience." And is it not true, brethren, that many a humble Christian has shown this serenity, and has experienced, perhaps, deeper and sweeter revelations of the love of God in his soul, than Milton, although he has not had the heavenly visions of the poet, nor heard the angel quires?

A Christian's contentment may, yet again, be cultivated, by his constant purpose to imitate the Master in his meek human life on earth, to grow more and more like Christ in spirit, and to come into his love, since it is being one with Christ in spirit that poises our life in divine love.

The loving mind is happy; the humble spirit has peace. We have heard of the happiness of the unhappy, or of those who have nothing but God, but, having Him, have all. To bear the cross silently on, depending upon the crucified

for strength to endure; to draw continually from his spirit, "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God," — this is the way to nourish an inward peace amid the changes and trials of life; and it is a great thing not only "to take up the cross," but also to know how "to follow Christ" with a humble, joyful, and loving mind.

The believer would deepen and widen his contentment, I remark once more, by striving to repress those vain lustings of the mind that are the kindlings of an undisciplined imagination and barren thinking; and, on the other hand, by maintaining a cheerful activity in practical Christian work. A state of living that is hopeful, laborious, kindly to man and single-eyed to God, should take the place of an intellectual dreaminess out of which come monstrous births, fantastic and empty as clouds without rain; for the fruits of happiness spring from the faithful tilling of the field where God has put us, be it ever so lowly, be it in study, in business, or in day-labour, under the hottest sun or coldest blast.

Contentment comes from genuinely loving God and man, and doing good to men or living in their lives; and, above all, from the consciousness that

God is our Father, and that we have God with us in this life, and that we do, ever, "walk with Him."

The saints and patriarchs who, in the morning of the world, walked with God, and over whom, we have been taught, hung a divine light of transcendent glory and mystery, were, really, no nearer God than the humblest believer now is, who lives with Christ daily and serves Him with a whole heart.

I would wish only to add that the apostle, in the words of this confession which he left for our encouragement, does not or would not evidently confine his meaning to the mere state of his outer life, which is not the real life, but he would extend it to the inner state. Thus, he would not refer solely to his poverty or abundance, sickness or health, his being in prison or being free, but also to his mind — its riches and wants, health and sickness. He was contented with the limitations of his own nature, intellectual and moral, where these limitations or imperfections did not involve what was sinful, though he thought himself a very poor saint; for, in these things which he could not controul he read the divine plan in his life, and learned the peculiar work God meant him to do. Thus, the apostle, or any other man who has true contentment, is led to give up an inordinate am-

bition which strives after things above his power; and is not this peculiarly the sin of the American nature, never satisfied with possessing, grasping what is beyond it, — a source, it is true, normally or healthily developed, of individual and national greatness, — but a principle which, when grown to disproportion, is the root of morbid anxiety, unhappiness, pride, jealousy, self-conceit, and unmanly weakness.

There is a generous unrest in youth, a grand discontent, ever pressing it on to higher things, which regards nothing as too high, which despises obstacles, and which is inspirited more than discouraged by difficult undertakings. This self-assurance, this fiery courage, is given for a good purpose, — for the bold, great deeds of the world are done by young men. Beautiful, indeed, is this soul-daring; and yet high as is the aspiration of youth, Christian faith comes in early as an attempering power, as a calm voice from above, speaking truth to the soul, guiding its efforts by a higher wisdom and love, telling it where its real force lies, bidding it not be disheartened by failure, softening its impetuous fire, touching with a firmer strength its ardent courage, revealing to it the eternal principles of right and duty, making it know what success is, making it know that, while Christ calls for all its energies, the highest

activities may coexist with a quiet and gentle spirit.

> "Oh, Lacedæmon's olden band,
> Thy flutes of silver sound
> Teach me, however firm my stand
> Upon life's battle-ground, —
> However resolute the blow
> I deal in pressing on,
> My inmost spirit should but know
> A quiet under-tone."

On the eve of his forty-seventh birthday (the day before his death), Thomas Arnold of Rugby writes of the work he would like to do in the world, but adds: "Let me mind my own work above all, — to keep myself pure, zealous, believing, labouring to do God's will, yet not anxious that it should be done by me rather than by another if God disapproves of my doing it." Here was manifest the even-poised and apostolic spirit that had entered into the divine unity. Christ's blessed life, above all, teaches us patience in which dwells final victory; unselfishness which delivers from a thousand torturing desires; contentment; steady perseverance in good endeavour; the wish to do a little well, rather than fail in attempting things beyond its reach; a constant love and an immortal aim.

It bids the soul be cheerful, hopeful, loving, and brave; glad to serve anywhere; rejoicing evermore; filled with the joy of a life given up to the

Lord of its life, who gave Himself for us, and who says to all restless minds that are still secretly untamed, proud, and therefore without joy: "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

V.

Christian Hope.

V.

CHRISTIAN HOPE.

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail. — HEB. vi. 19.

HOPE is one of the noblest of the natural instincts. It is, as the poets say, the sunshine of the mind. Like the old sun-dial of Saint Marks at Venice, it marks only the cloudless hours. It has a lifting power which raises and carries life on. The boy hopes to be a man, and you see, in his thoughtful moments, the dignity and energy of a man, so that you say, "He will be a credit to his family. He will conquer Silesia." The man looks through the years, bearing up under their burdens, to the honours and rest of old age. Old age, stript of all else, ought at least not to live on the past, as is often said, but to be waiting in joyful expectation of something better that is beyond. There is this quality of hope in us which is the spring of our courage and of the capacity of recovery from disappointment and defeat, — Prince Eugene was always more terrible in defeat than

in victory. Hope, "the nerve of life," as Thackeray calls hope, without which man would lose half his happiness and power, and power of growth, making him "a man of hope and forward-looking mind even to the last," is that which gives life its impetus; but which native quality, strong though it be, ends in human nature and what it can do and compass. It is, like human nature itself, a thing of earthly uncertainty whose grounds are ever shifting; while the hope which is spoken of in the New Testament, or that which may be called Christian hope — even if it use the beautiful natural instinct while transforming it into something spiritual — is a more enduring principle, partaking of the eternal state of being.

If we look at the reasons why Christian hope, as distinguished from the natural or instinctive quality, is likened to an anchor that enters into the veil and is sure and steadfast, the chief reason of it we will find to be that it is a hope which is fixed upon God and His truth, where alone is stability. God's being is that which "is," not that which "becomes." "God is, and He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Even the sinful nature may change until it partake of the character of God; but no element of change enters into the being of God, since change in Him would imply that there is a necessity for change,

or that He is in some respect imperfect, whereas for God to be God He must be perfect; and thus in the very idea of God, and the qualities which constitute the divine nature, there is no room for change; for such a supposition destroys the perfection of the divine idea, and implies a contradiction in itself. Nothing can add to or take from the perfect One in whom all fulness dwells; though let us fairly understand that God is not unchangeable in the sense that His nature is one of immovable hardness like a rock; for His heart is touched by the most delicate emotions that the purest spirit is capable of feeling; but He is unchangeable in the immutability of those moral qualities which form His character and upon which the government of the world rests secure. It is not the unchangeableness of unintelligent and unfeeling things; no, for the good man, true and tender-hearted, ruled by his better reason, who feels most but changes morally least, and who tends to be more and more fixed in the spirit of his mind in good, the most nearly resembles God of anything of which we have knowledge; but unlike the best human being, who has faults, God is ever the same in His essence, power, truth, wisdom, and love. Were He changeable in wisdom, He could not purpose for eternity, but His purposes lacking wisdom would clash with

one another and there would be elemental and all-destroying strife; and were He changeable in power, His wisest purposes could not be carried out, and He would be compelled to become untrue to His word. But His will once revealed knows no change, else there would be no sure basis for all that is to rest upon, or all that may be to proceed from; and wherein or wherever, therefore, God has clearly revealed His will, we may know that it will be fulfilled. If we see the proofs of God's firmness in the unalterable operations of His physical laws — a principle on which all science is founded — so we may believe that the blessed promises of God will come true, and that He who brings forth the spring violets from under the snows of winter, rejoices to bring out from the most rugged and unpropitious circumstances the blossoming of every hidden seed of hope; and the rugged circumstances form a factor in the divine plan. In God's wisdom misfortune is a blessing, and compels men to use their powers boldly, and to do things that they could not possibly have done in prosperous times. And God does not desert a soul in misfortune. When we seem to be entirely hemmed in He makes a way of escape for the soul. In the drear immensity of the Arabian desert where nothing else grows you will find minute sand-flowers too small even for

fragrance, and yet that cheer the wanderer and say, "Up, heart, there is hope for thee!"

How little do we truly know or can imagine of God! How we limit Him in our narrow theories! How short are our conceptions of Him! How small a part do we see of the orb of the divine nature, and of the all-comprehending plan of His goodness working silently in the depths of the unfathomable mystery in which He veils Himself, and His love to all the creatures He has made!

Another reason why Christian hope has in it the principle of stability is, because it has a source of strength in the perfect character of the spiritual work which Jesus Christ has done for and in the soul. Here we find the Christian element coming in. Christ is the eternal uncreated Word in whom the being, truth, and love of God are spoken, or manifested beyond the clearest expressions of God in nature or any creature; for the redemptive work of Christ springs from the divine will, or the working of divine love in the divine will, and therefore it is perfect and requires nothing added to it; or, as Milton said, "The Holy Spirit needs no supplement;" and the Holy Spirit is also called in the Scriptures "the spirit of Christ;" so that the work of Christ has a wonderful consistency, and, so to speak, eternal character. It is not a work that was begun when Jesus was born

in Bethlehem, but it bridges over from one eternity to another eternity. "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you who by him do believe in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." The work of the Son of God was accomplished in the divine mind as something belonging to its nature of eternal love before man or sin came into existence — "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day and forever." Christ is in God as His eternal Son who ever manifests His active power of love, and herein exists the energic redemptive principle of Christianity. Whatever difficulties there are in the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice, they will vanish when we follow it up to its source in the love of God; and its impossibilities (we sometimes say nothing is impossible to human love) become nothing if it sprang from the love of God, if "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" to die for its sins. But all the sacrifices of men and their efforts after goodness, the lives of heroes, sages, and saints, we feel could not make a perfect sacrifice for sin; it would be weak and full of flaws; but we know that if the love of God undertook to make that sacrifice He could do it, and when that love "spared not his own Son" but

freely gave him up for us all, the clouds of mystery are dissipated and the light of heavenly hope breaks forth.

Not only the divine, but even the human part of Christ's work, from His birth to His resurrection, gives no signs of failure or imperfection. Christ became true man that He might redeem man, and His human nature was that of one "made perfect through suffering," approaching the cross with slow and steady step. Every stone was squared and in its place in the altar before the offering was laid on it. The humble birth; the poverty; the life of obedience to the law of righteousness purer than snow

> "That 's bolted by the northern blasts, twice o'er;"

the temptation in the wilderness; the ministry of love; the words of power; the sorrow and miracle of Bethany; the hate and treachery of men; the forgiveness of enemies; the thorns, the nails, the bearing of the cross, — all these had to be accomplished before the end came. Christ went through what man goes through, or can go through, touching every human part, relation, and need, preserving His obedience to the end, doing all the will of the Father, and righteously triumphing for and in weak humanity, and then, stretched on the shameful tree, as He was about to yield His spirit, could

He cry with a loud voice, "It is finished!" An offering for human sin was made by that strong and tender love, and nothing was incomplete. As even the clothes in the sepulchre were rolled up and laid by themselves when Christ arose, nothing was left undone. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the confirmation, and, as it were, celestial touch, or crown, put on Christian hope, that carries it across the confines of death into the worlds beyond. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again into a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

Christian hope may be seen to be something sure and stable in its nature, lastly, because as a matter of experience, there is a strong and indestructible expectation, the fruit of the spirit of Christ, which is awaked in the Christian soul and the Christian church, and has always been so in every age and every believing mind. There is nothing more inspiring in the study of history than to trace the beginnings of this new hope in Christian civilization, and its ennobling influence in public morals, law, and government, the treatment of oppressed classes, the social elevation of woman,

the higher uses of property, in art, science, literature, politics and every phase of human life, forming the spring of progress, and having in it a certain faculty of prophecy, in which, as a German writer says, "the longing heart goes forth to meet beforehand great and new creations and hastens to anticipate the mighty future;" above all, making the soul invincible to evil, come in whatever shape it may, in poverty, old age, sickness, prison, wreck, war, the contempt of the world and the violence of active persecution; or whether it come in the more hidden trials and struggles of the spirit. This hope has shown itself able to bear and do all things. The lowness of nature is raised by it; the darkness of nature is illumined by it; and we are too far along in the history of the world, for any one to deny the psychologic fact, that men who sooner or later lose in life's fight their native or instinctive hope, receive through Christianity something stronger and higher that does not leave them. There can be no delusion here. There is a hope which comes into the mind, however inexplicable, which was not there before, — a new instinct of a new nature. It is, as the Scriptures call it, "a living hope," — an active principle working by love and purifying the heart. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself;" for it is faith in eternal things which is

at the bottom of this hope, and it is the outcome of a new spiritual life within.

I believe that this hope is the privilege of every Christian, so that the glory of the Invisible whom he follows, accompanies, exalts, and glorifies him also; but I affirm, that, notwithstanding the confident tone of unbelieving men, or "free-religionists," whose freedom is in cutting themselves off from Christ, — notwithstanding the acumen shown in their theories, they have in their hearts no firm assurance of hope like that which held the hearts of the early disciples in the first ages of the Church when persecution after persecution swept over it like ocean tempests, and which is symbolized by a rude anchor carved on the tombs of Christians in the Roman catacombs, and which has sometimes been called the ante-Nicene faith of the Church of the catacombs. Then Christianity meant tribulation, and most probably death; but it meant also hope that overcame trouble and death. It was a hope that held the ship on a lee shore, because it was fastened upon divine strength. But men who reject Christ, work inwardly in their own minds and thus continually narrow the grounds of hope, which must look forward, or be dropped into the infinite. It is not what we do, but it is what God has done and is doing for and in us, — the immanent God; on

whom a spiritual hope lays hold, entering into the veil. These men, therefore, by their subjective and rationalistic methods cannot arrive at a sure hope; and as their faith is held in solution so their hope is constantly changing. They are ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. A child may come to this knowledge sooner than they. Their religion is a religion not of hope but of despair. They never reach a restful union with God, in which the mind, however it be a learner, has a consciousness of staying itself on a higher power and love, with an inner grasp upon the divine. He who has this hope enjoys a communion with the divine. He wins the blessed unity which is in God. A "new marvellous light" arises in him and spreads through his being. There is a letting in of the love of God to the soul which expels its gloom and selfishness; and selfishness must be pressed out of true hope. In the instance of any one of us who knows at all what life is, has not the hope which perhaps was most cherished been already partially or wholly laid in ruins? Has not the dear one been taken upon whom we built with a confidence that ought to have been placed upon God alone? Has He suffered us to enjoy thoroughly, even here, one hope in which He was not centred? Does not disappointment sooner or later come to such a selfish

hope? And it is best that it should, for there is an element of moral falseness in it, and such a hope cannot have a settled bliss in the moral economy of God. But, on the contrary, there has sprung up something calm and sweet, like a pure light in the Christian heart, which grows stronger and stronger, which thrives under trial, which lives in the storm, which is above change, which partakes of the divine nature, which is so marked a fact in Christian consciousness that it must have a reality; for it is the same in all believers, it wears the same features now that it wore in the times of primitive Christianity; it is a hope which maketh not ashamed; which has an invincible energy of goodness; which enters into the joy of the Lord; which soars above time and is filled with a heavenly peace. Such pleasure experienced here in God, such openings of the soul into His love, must look forward at some time to a blissful enjoyment of Him, — to the great vision of God and His eternal peace. It is this simple fact which makes Christianity, notwithstanding its solemn truths, a cheerful religion, and which gives it a quality of joy that fills it as with a perpetual sunshine. In the apostolic church this awoke the voice of song and brought to the world the life of a new blossoming springtime rich in its promise of great things, — its

true golden age, not past but present and to come.

It was a mediæval Christianity born in the cells of monasteries, and which also tinged the Protestantism that came out of it, that brought again over the world the clouds of doubt, darkness, and despair, and made the scenery of religious life like the infernal landscape, powerful but gloomy, through which the poet Dante walked.

This hope of the Christian, then, is a great hope, a bright, clear, and steady hope, surpassing all the vague desires of the natural heart, beautiful as the poetry of the heart sometimes makes these to appear, — yet earthly and evanescent, like the painted clouds that pile up in the western sky of a summer's sunset turning ashy and deathly pale when the light fades out of them. But the "things hoped for" are too fair, too high, too pure, even to be conceived. The prayer, indeed, of this hope is not for a life without trials, but, with the apostle, the believer would fight that he might win; he would endure self-denial that he might rise above the sensual into the spiritual; and while the hope sustains and cheers, he would also "know Christ" and the fellowship of His sufferings, and sound the depths of Christ's holy life and perfect victory. My dear hearer, is your hope thus well-grounded? When the storm comes, does the

anchor hold? When a strong and unexpected temptation falls like a sudden blast on you, does the anchor hold? In the face of real affliction — of death — would it hold? Does your hope take hold of the unchangeable love of God? If so, when tempted, "rejoice, and show the same diligence, with the full assurance of hope unto the end." Armed with a hope which has in it this sure promise, go forth to a life of goodness. Expect to achieve great things. Never yield to the spirit of doubt and despondency. Awake from barren dreamings. Better to have been nourished in a Pagan creed, better to have been born in the old Greek land where there was something still bright and heroic in Nature, than to have known Christ and yet to be ashamed of Him and His service; than once to have had the great hope of Christ and to let it die out in unmanly fear. The world needs brave men. The cause of Christ demands earnest helpers. Be assured that next to the sin of unbelief is the sin of indifference which is the death of greatness because it is the death of hope.

VI.

The Childlike Spirit.

VI.

THE CHILDLIKE SPIRIT.

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. — MATT. xviii. 1–3.

WE are told in another gospel that the event spoken of by Matthew took place soon after the scene of the Transfiguration, and grew out of the Lord's having chosen three disciples, Peter, James, and John, to go up the mountain with him, thus lifting them for an instant into the light of supernatural manifestation, whereby they seem to have been unduly exalted; while the other disciples, moved by envy, were as unduly depressed. Hence sprang up strife as to who of them was greatest.

We may conceive Peter, with his spirit of self-assertion, imperiously urging his claims to the primacy, not only because he had been upon the glorified mount, but, because at a former time, the Lord had singled him out, by declaring that

in his confession of faith, he was "Peter," and upon this rock (ταύτη τῇ πετρα) Christ would build his church; Andrew retorted that he (Andrew) was the disciple who had first found the Messiah; John, the meditative disciple, yet with earthly fire smouldering in his heart shown by his calling down a thunderbolt on a Samaritan village, awaked from his reflections by the discussion, claimed that he had received tokens of peculiar confidence, and most tender friendship from the Master; while Philip set forth, in his turn, the direct personal call of the Lord to him, "Follow me."

In these honest but still unspiritual minds, hardly raised above the common ideas of Judaism in which they had been reared, and having as yet no clear conception of a kingdom without form, of a spiritual kingdom, the strife went on, the Lord seeming not to notice it, until they had reached their home in Capernaum, and then he asked them what it was they had disputed about by the way, and read to them that immortal lesson of humility.

The truth which the words reveal to us, and this scene of a child set up to preach to angry men excited to controversy for precedence, would seem to be, that for one to enter the kingdom which Christ came to found, he must become childlike in

heart, since Christ in these words made a little child the door-keeper of his eternal kingdom. What would those who were then living under Cæsar, whether Jews or Romans, at the period of the world-wide expansion of the Roman empire that aimed at universal dominion, say to the setting up of a child as the symbol of a kingdom which was to absorb and outlast its own!

This kingdom was a realm of the spirit where there is no room for strife of precedence, where he that is great must be as he that serves, and where no one rules but every one serves, even as the Master did; for "the spirit of Christ is what we are to seek and imitate; it is to our spiritual life we must take heed if we wish not to be cut off from Christ." We need not wear a seamless robe, we need not deprive ourselves of worldly possessions, we need not deny ourselves home and domestic relations, we need not be crucified as Christ was, but we should be meek, loving, and holy as he was.

Is it not, indeed, a radical change in human nature when a man comes to see the Christlike excellence of living to serve, instead of living to rule? This is a new spirit. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom," — the kingdom of the spirit of Christ. One must be converted, turned about, so that he treads

back his life, its windings of pride and wastes of selfishness, until he becomes a child fresh from the hand of the Creator, standing face to face with eternity, without a wish or will of his own, rejoicing to take from the divine hand the gift of life.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," because it is this poverty of spirit that constitutes the receptivity for God and all He gives. To love God is the yielding up of the selfish principle. This humility in the sight of God under the teachings of the spiritual law, is the preparation for the gift of eternal life.

But the question is, will a man be willing to become a child? Will he give up his self-righteousness? Will he lay himself beside the spiritual law? Will he ask for help because he is helpless? Will he show by his actions that he believes as well as confesses that he is weak, that not an act or a desire is thoroughly pure, that in him dwells no good thing, that there is nothing in him that can save him? Will the strong man become a little child so that a new heart shall be given him?

Humility is the most abused of the Christian graces, and because it is a childlike quality, it has sometimes been made to stand for an unmanly and contemptible quality, a creeping hypocritical thing, a spiritless travesty of the real virtue.

Humility is among the most unselfish of the Christian graces, it is not mean but manly, not seeming but true. It is being just to all even to one's self. It takes nothing to itself which does not belong to it. It is brave enough to confess its fault, and it is this spiritual abasement, this lowly but courageous repentance, willing not only to condemn itself, but glad as a little child to receive new life from God's hand, that opens the pure rewards of the heavenly kingdom.

Let us look at this childlike spirit, which is the spirit of humility, and we shall see that it is capable of development into other similar but distinct qualities, though all of them are mingled with that pervading humility in whose soil they are, as it were, rooted, and which unites them all.

The first characteristic of this childlike spirit would seem to be its trustfulness, which is the prime beauty and excellence of childhood, so that he who can learn nothing from the trustfulness of children is dull-hearted. Martin Luther said, beholding his children at play, "How precious little children are to the Lord, and this is because they receive all things with such a simple trust."

To receive with this childlike trust, not doubting, from the hand of God, the unspeakable gift of His Son, as one receives His lower gifts of light, air, water, and food, appropriating and feeding

upon this spiritual gift, this bread from heaven, unto eternal life, is the essence of Christian faith, and is so elementary and familiar a principle in Christian experience, that we need not dwell upon it, though the greatest things are wrapped in it as a germ of the everlasting life.

A second characteristic of the childlike spirit of the kingdom of heaven, though it be like separating by a prism one ray of light from another where they are one, is that of truth, or truthfulness, which quality enables one to see clearly into the things that belong to God, and to distinguish them from those that belong to our mere earthly life. The child, as retaining more freshly the spiritual image of God in which he was made, the ideal of the divine nature of which he is the offspring, has something of the intuition of higher truth,

> "And feels through all his fleshly dress
> Bright shoots of everlastingness."

This world is strange to the child, and by his nearer kinship with the spiritual world, spiritual things are more real to him than material, and his view of this reveals to him truths which the man with difficulty retains and recovers, — so a keen observer of human nature has said. This intuition of the unseen, this freedom from error and deceit, this seeing things as they are without an attempt at distorting them, this loyal love of truth begun

in inexperience and only won back through faith, when lost, which is the opening of the eye to see truth, should be carefully nourished in the child. As he whispers his morning and evening prayer without a cloud between him and God, let no dogmas that men have invented chill his simple and true faith!

This truthfulness should go on without a break, or doubt, or suspicion, into youth, manhood, and age, so that what God's grace and an instinctive affection had taught the child, should become the deliberate choice of the mature mind. Those Jewish mothers who brought their children to Christ to lay his hand upon them and bless them, had already some right instinct in regard to divine things, and some true appreciation of what Christ's religion was.

I quote the words of Thomas de Quincey, which have more force as coming from one not usually regarded as authority in religious matters: —

"My opinion is that when circumstances favour, where the heart is deep, where humility and tenderness exist in strength, where the situation is favourable as to solitude and as to genial feelings, children have a specific power of contemplating the truth which departs as they enter the world. It is clear to me that children upon elementary paths which require no knowledge of the world to unravel, tread more firmly than men, have a more pathetic

sense of justice, and, according to the immortal ode of our great laureate, 'On the intimations of Immortality in Childhood,' a far closer communion with God. Observe in St. Matthew xxi. 15, who were those that, crying in the temple, made the first public recognition of Christianity. Then, if you say, 'Oh, but children echo what they hear,' I must request you to extend your reading into verse 16, where you will find that the testimony of these children as bearing an original value, was ratified by the higher testimony; the recognition of these children did itself receive a heavenly recognition. And this could not have been unless there were children in Jerusalem who saw into truth with a far sharper eye than Sanhedrims and Rabbis."

There is power and instruction in these words, for it is a noteworthy fact that in unperverted childhood there is a singleness of spirit which shows that truth is the constitutional law, or the moral atmosphere, so to speak, of the mind.

We see in the believer, who is the child newborn into the kingdom, the same crystalline truthfulness which pierces through error and outward appearances into the inward heart of truth. He discerns right and wrong without reasoning much upon it. He puts aside as flimsy webs the fine-spun sophistries of men. The only thing in the world, it is said, which Napoleon could not understand, was an honest man; and the world in like manner cannot comprehend this truthfulness which

is an essential quality of the childlike mind renewed by the spirit of truth. So the ancients thought Christians to be atheists and the most wicked of men because they were simply honest, and without outward religious forms and pretension. This is, as St. Bernard characterizes it, that *unctio non eruditio, non scientia sed conscientia*, that is not learning, but the teaching or anointing of the spirit, the knowledge from within not from without. Such a mind is able to recognize the presence, work, and will of Christ wherever it is manifested, and to appropriate to itself in the world and in the Word whatever is divine, even as the children of Jerusalem, first of all, recognized the Messiah, the King of Truth, and gave him a royal reception of loving hearts. The renewed mind is led up by the spirit to a higher eminence than the unspiritual mind, however far-sighted, can occupy. The eye is cleared of its mists of error and passion, so that it sees far over the broad fields of divine knowledge, and has a clear perception of heavenly things even in this world, and which is above science's dry light. The theology of the schools cannot teach this, but it is the wisdom that comes from above, so that humble persons sometimes possess an astonishing insight into spiritual things; indeed, I recall a poor labouring woman, the wife of a light-house keeper, who led a lonely life on

the stormy coast of Massachusetts, and whose ever-trimmed light had been the joy of many a tempest-driven vessel, who seemed to have this spiritual intuition as if she were taught first-hand by the spirit, for her only book was the Bible; and it was more profitable to talk with her on practical religious subjects than to read works of Christian philosophy, for she knew things by experience; God had taught her; she saw into truth with an unobstructed eye; and, to my thinking, the "doctrine" of Christ which flows from a personal union with Him and the inward teachings of His spirit, the principles of eternal life such as the children of God who live by faith have, — this doctrine or teaching has come down to us through just such simple hearts, and this constitutes the doctrine of the Church, not as taught by creeds or bishops or ministers, but by the *consensus* of the faith of simple believers, whether laymen or ministers, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, in whom the truth ever lives, for it is the united testimony and consciousness of childlike spirits taught by Christ, and forming the one testimony of the spirit through the ages. Faith in the Lord Christ is that Christian confession for which the martyrs died and in which the first believers lived, and that is simple and profound; so that the modern multiplication of extensive ecclesiastical

test-creeds is an evil, becoming, as these creeds sometimes do, occasions of stumbling, and of compromise, and prevarication, and half-hearted subscription. Creeds, indeed, are but symbols when the reality has come. They do not even serve as a protection or perpetuation of the truth. Christianity, at this age of the world, may freely trust its defence to the spirit and life of true believers, and not to words; for a creed is a word, but faith is a life; a creed is human and subject to change, but faith is divine and eternal.

There is, once more, the quality of freedom, which belongs to the new childlike spirit of the kingdom, and which makes that liberty of the children of God, wherein the legal artificiality of the Pharisee, as well as the self-complacent rigidity of the mere moralist, both of them disappear, and the spirit of Christian liberty takes their place. In such a heart there is a glad freedom in right doing which the sublimest principle of duty without love could not inspire; even as the child is free in every act while yet dependent, so the child of God is brought into that freedom wherein the spirit of bondage again to fear is removed, and the man rejoices once more to act freely, as he did when he was a child. He loves the law which he obeys, and submits to it as a delight, not feeling it as a yoke.

And, allied to this, there is the quality of unworldliness, or denial of the worldly principle, which was the peculiar lesson taught by the Saviour to his disciples, and which I have touched upon necessarily in speaking of the underlying grace of humility. This is the spirit which, without seeming to feel the loss, denies itself worldly power, gain, and success, for Christ's dear sake, even as the child has had as yet no fevered dream of power, and it is the practical outworking of the Christian principle of self-denial. To the unspiritual mind there is no greater misery than to be weak, better anything than to be weak, better to perish than to be weak, and such a mind is led to despise goodness because there is often in goodness apparent weakness; and if one to be good must be weak, then, like Macbeth on the barren heath, it welcomes the curse evil brings, if it bring power with it, power that is palpable in some worldly prize, crown or success, and that lifts a man above the mass of incapables and stamps him with a masterful and royal individuality. It is safe to say, as an Arabian proverb has it, that the love of power lies concealed in every man's heart like a bud which awaits a favourable moment, an hour of sunshine, to open it; for did not the apostles of our Lord under the eye of their meek and divine

Master, contend as to who of them should be greatest?

I do not deny that there is a true use of the ambitious principle, or desire for perfection, which is implanted in us for the development of our mental energies, and that this is a spring of progress in intellectual power and wisdom, and is meant to be so, but the wrong use of the ambitious principle consists in its selfish character. It is the striving for power and not for the good uses of power. It is seeking self-glory and not self-reformation. It is not bent upon the general but the individual happiness. It is aiming to make one's self greater not better. It is a thirst for applause whether the act deserve true praise or not, for to seek one's own glory, the Scripture says, is not glory. It is thrusting others aside or down in order that one may be first. This is not a principle which is established in the universal ends of the divine kingdom, its law of justice, its true "glory and honour and immortality," the praise of God, the approbation of Christ the righteous Redeemer, the Christlike elevation of the nature and the happiness of humanity, but in the earthly end of self-glory.

This principle of competition in all one does and is, carried beyond reasonable bounds, is becoming an alarming evil in a democratic country like ours,

entering into every work, into the business world, the social world, the school, the university, industrial pursuits, and matters of less importance even, of play and amusement, so that almost everything is done by competition "through strife and vainglory," and there seems to be no zest in doing anything except as a matter of rivalry; but it is a zest that has often a bitter fruit, and it goes to destroy the nobleness of work, the profitableness of labour, the joy of play, the worth of life. The cultivation of the principle of selfish ambition eats out like an acid the simplicity of a man's character as hardly no other passion does. It is so poisonous that nothing healthful grows by the side of it. It kills sympathy and every generous motive. Knowledge is not sought for for knowledge's sake, it does not know how charming is divine philosophy; but knowledge is gained whereby to win a reputation, to employ it as a sharp sword to carve a name with. This passion would rule by power, but men hate its rule. It would command respect by its display of superior ability; it would make men honour and respect it whether they will or no; but the honour it gets, having no love in it, is poor and unsatisfying. He who gives a cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of a disciple, or because Christian love prompts him, gets a higher reward in his soul than

the man who drinks every cup of human praise that the world can put to his lips. The faith which overcomes the world and which sets things in their right relations, alone will enable a man to subdue the temptation of ambition. Have we not all felt the restless movings and strivings of this principle sufficiently to learn, or at least to desire to learn, to put it down, to extinguish it forever lest it consume us and we lose the pure crown of God's heavenly kingdom? I might go on to show that greatness is to be gained in far different ways, and that though thus humble and childlike, this quality of unworldliness, or unworldly goodness, is no principle of weakness but strength, that goodness is stronger than greatness, because ultimately greatness rests on goodness, or on a purpose that is in harmony with the right rule of the universe. Heroic men have been childlike men, unconscious of greatness. Some one called one of the greatest English poets "an immortal child." We have at all events the Saviour's implicit word, that in the moral and spiritual realm which he founded, he is greatest who becomes as a little child, who is childlike in spirit, for a man then comes by faith into that kingdom in which he is near the celestial springs, the will, the spirit, and the joy of God. There his powers are purified from envy and self-seeking, from everything weak and earthly,

and are filled with a more potent spirit, are lifted out of the low life of self in which they soon become wasted, into a divine life raised above self in which the powers grow stronger, nobler, and more beautiful.

There is need briefly to mention but one more quality of this childlike spirit of the kingdom, which it would be wrong not to mention if we would come at its deepest nature, the nature of those children of light who walk in the light of the Most High and do always behold the face of the Father, and that is filial love.

The virile principle of Christian character consists in the education of the will in right action, in doing those things, as good soldiers, which like scaling a fort it is difficult for human nature to do; but the childlike principle of Christian character consists in the education of a dependent spirit, the loving recognition of the Father, for this love is the essence of the spirit of the Son. It is the perfecting of the law, or the bringing to a complete spiritual obedience of, and union with, the divine will. The heart has been injured by sin more than the head. It is the heart's profound separation from the loving will of the Father that has caused the loss of the knowledge of God, since "he that loveth knoweth God," and to be able to return to God and say, "Our Father," requires

something more than a judicial process of the reason, or a forced acknowledgment of the conscience, or a deliberate choice of the will; it must be a movement of the heart's deepest affections toward the Father. In any man who becomes His true child it implies a sincere return from every other object of love unto God, a new heavenly bent, a cheerful sympathy in those things God loves, a loving service of His holy will, a going about to do good in imitation of His Son's constant beneficence, a childlike confidence in all that He does, and a delightful sense of fellowship with the Father. The natural man though set in the magnificent and variegated garden of God's abounding goodness and having all things richly to enjoy, hides away from the voice of the Father that sounds in the solemn eventide hour of reflection like the voice of doom to the weakened conscience.

Nature indeed acknowledges God after a fashion, outwardly, as the force that drives the worlds, and the beauty that adorns them. It bows before Him in public worship, enshrines Him in the hills and seats Him among the inaccessible stars, but nature does not know Him as the Father of spirits. The natural man unrenewed in his mind would not have God come nearer than in Nature; he would not acknowledge God in the spirit, nor have Him

enter the soul to cleanse and sanctify it, and to dwell in it as a holy loving Father.

This privilege is given us through our union with Christ and coming into His secret, "neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." "And because ye are sons God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts whereby ye cry, Abba, Father."

To those who truly believe it is given to be made the sons of God, to have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and to know and love and to be known and loved by the Father. Our souls are orphaned by sin, are strangers to peace, are longing for love. Here is the everlasting love for which the soul was made, and for which it pines. The soul itself loves in loving God. Here the wandering child returns to his Father and lays his head on His breast. Here he gladly brings his cares, doubts, fightings, ambitions, temptations, disappointments, sorrows, to the Fatherly heart of unchanging love. Therefore it is, that spiritual joy is one of the most heavenly of the Christian graces. Christ was a child in Bethlehem. This event, historic in time, revealed the joyful truth of regeneration and the new-birth of humanity. It was everlasting life come in the lowliness of the flesh. We think of the holy child

at Christmastide; but why not think of a truth of such spiritual reach and import at other times and always, so that the divine childhood may become a constant spring of joy and praise and new life in us?

And when the child Jesus sat among the doctors and taught them of the Father, a new religion arose.

Let us, dear friends, strive to find this great heart of the Father, to be enfolded in its paternal embrace, where alone are to be found peace, purity, light, riches, honour, power, love, hope, joy. Let us arise and go to the Father, confessing our sins; and He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, for He is not afar off but is nigh unto them who are of a broken spirit; and His kingdom is a present kingdom, a spiritual kingdom, and though barred to a proud heart yet stands open with all its gates to every childlike soul and none such shall fail of its pure joys.

VII.

A Song of Freedom.

VII.

A SONG OF FREEDOM.

And they sung as it were a new song. — REV. xiv. 3, part of verse.

THE man who makes a song that the people love to sing is a common benefactor; and it is for this reason that the poets, the song-makers, are set like stars in the constellation of illustrious names, for they give expression to those yearnings that are beyond the desires of every-day life, they utter the deeper hopes, wants, fears, joys, and aspirations of the spiritual nature.

An English writer says: —

"No wonder the people of Scotland loved Burns as perhaps never people loved a poet. He not only sympathized with the wants, trials, joys, and sorrows of their lot, but he interpreted these to themselves, and interpreted them to others, — and this too, in their own language, made musical and glorified by genius. He made the ploughman proud of his toils since Robbie Burns had shared and sung them. In looking to him the Scotch people have seen an impersonation of themselves."

A song, therefore, that the people take to their hearts and sing, is expressive of something univer-

sal, and that belongs to man as man, sometimes aspiring, heroic, and joyful, but too often blended like the songs of Burns, with the "sad music of humanity."

Although the significance of the new song of heaven is something to which we can approximate only by the exercise of a reverent imagination, yet there is a hint in the following chapter which may aid in the interpretation of this new song. "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." How strange the mingling of thought here, or this joining the song of Moses with the song of the Lamb! Yet this may afford, at least, a suggestion, which shall help us in coming at the real significance of the new song, so that from the ruder and earthlier strains of the song of Moses, mingled it may be with human sinfulness, passion, and revenge, we may divine something of the character of the higher song; and even as the song of Moses, which was sung on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, was a song of victory over the enemies of God and His church, when He had led His ancient

people forth by His servant Moses from their bondage, and wrought for them a great deliverance; in like manner, we have reason to conclude that the song of the Lamb, which is so closely blended with this, as if its spirit, or echo, were caught up into heaven, would be, also, a song of freedom, a triumph-note for some kind of deliverance; and, as it is called a "new song," it is doubtless the song of a new and higher victory.

A song is, above all, an expression of the heart, something uncompelled and spontaneous, the irrepressible upspringing of an inward emotion. A bird sings because it cannot help singing, and because its little heart is thrilling with an overflowing joy; and so they who sing the "new song" have had, doubtless, some true experience of a great good and joy which causes them to sing.

The "new song," therefore, we cannot but believe, must be learned in this world though it be lisped by a stammering tougue; must be born in the humble, listening heart amid the conflicts of this earth, as a true heart-experience.

I think I am right in saying that it is the experience of every thoughtful man that all the real misery (I do not say suffering) he ever had, has sprung, in some way, from spiritual wrong. If he have lost friends, which is one of our great natural

griefs, yet if sin had not thrust itself into this sorrow, if the soul of the friend as well as one's own, had been perfectly true to God, and to right, one would find in the bereavement a cause to rejoice, for to the holy dead God reveals the fulness of His love, and removes them from the tyranny of evil, and they come back to us immortal and glorious —

> "They haunt the silence of the breast,
> Imaginations calm and fair,
> The memory like a cloudless air,
> The conscience as a sea at rest.
>
> "But when the heart is full of sin,
> And doubt beside the portal waits,
> They can but listen at the gates,
> And hear the household jars within."

It is the conscious want of the love of God, manifesting itself in acts of selfishness, ingratitude, and treason to truth and duty, — it is always this that has made the human spirit wail. Selfishness is a constant pain, and love a constant joy. A good heart, or a good deed, though involving self-denial, never in itself gave misery. If we are persecuted for righteousness' sake, blessed are we, and there is light in the soul serene as heaven, which cannot be quenched; and if we are oppressed for a wrong act which we have not done, we may bear the oppression with some degree of cheerful fortitude,

until the time of our redemption draws nigh. But when we know that we have done the wrong, that we have been the proud, selfish, wicked hearts who are self-accused by the law of right in us, then the just consequences of evil are hard to bear, and they become a galling yoke. I do not deny the many natural sorrows of life, and that they are sometimes painful beyond human power to endure, and are an overweight that prevents us from rising to the height of our own capacities, but we would be strong from a divine strength to bear troubles and sufferings which fall to our lot in this life, and they would be only for our discipline and perfection, were we without transgression. These would be outside sufferings. But it is the feeling that we have acted unrighteously, that we have stained our soul's honour, that we have been unthankful to the Heavenly Father, that we have been unforgiving, unloving, unjust, and untrue to our fellow-men, that we have sold our birthright, as sons of God, for contemptible trifles, and degraded our natures to evil that were made to be holy and divine: it is this that consumes the spirit within us.

This is the real burden of life, bear it as we may, hide it as we may; for is it not true that no other one can really injure us but ourselves, that nothing outside of him can touch the good man, that there is nothing in him that evil can find, as

far as he is true, and that a man's only hindrance to the full enjoyment of God, even in this world, is his own wrong act? This secretly weighs a man down. This fills him with darkness and confusion of spirit. If we are raised for one instant by the quick motion of faith, by the absorbing exercise of prayer, by the unselfish act of pure obedience, into the light and liberty of God's presence, we gain inward freedom and peace, we experience an absolute deliverance from the tyranny of evil.

We may perceive, then, why the power of sin in our human nature is called in the Scriptures a "bondage." "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." Again it is said, "While they promise them liberty they themselves are the servants of corruption, for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." Although its power is something imperceptibly progressive, it is none the less real, for sin aims at the complete enslavement of the mind. It is pure absolutism. Let the bondsman strive once to free himself, to shake himself loose from his bonds, to change his own nature, and he will see what a grasp evil has. He will discover the depth of its power, that it goes through all the infinite reaches of his nature, and even in this life, and

perhaps very early, it begins to show its unsatisfying falsehood, its intolerable pain, its iron yoke.

It may be that you have seen a man bending under this yoke like Samson Agonistes. Martin Luther, whose name after these four hundred years resounds through the world, in his stone cell at Erfurth was only one such strong man in the pains of spiritual conflict. There are thousands at this moment, who like him, are crying in the anguish of their spirit, "Who shall deliver us from the body of this death?" How can we escape from this slavery?

To be freed from the power of evil would soothe all pangs, would wipe away all tears, sorrow, care, and would restore to the life-giving presence and joy of God. Can we not then begin, in some feeble manner I grant, to perceive or imagine what may be the significance of the "new song"? It is in truth a song of freedom, and we need not wonder that it is represented to be like the sound of many waters, the outpouring of innumerable hearts on the free shore of eternity, for God has made the soul to be free and to have no law over it but the law of love.

There are, indeed, but few such chords that vibrate in human hearts. Sorrow is one of these. Coleridge said that at the news of Nelson's death

no man felt himself a stranger to another; and of these universal chords, that of freedom is also one. Such a spontaneous cry rises from an enslaved nation, whose chains are broken by some God-inspired man. Never shall I forget the mighty shout I heard that went up from the whole people of Florence, gathered together in the great market-square of the beautiful city on the Arno, at the news of a decisive victory gained over the powerful enemy of Italian independence, — Austria. A new unlooked-for joy poured into the hearts of the suffering and long-oppressed Italian people that they were at length free!

It made them one. It overflowed their hearts with sudden strength, and men fell upon each other's necks and kissed each other, and their joy found expression in shouts and songs.

So it will be a new joy in heaven to be free, to be free from the shameful oppression of evil. This will put, think you not, a new song in the mouth of those who are at length made free. To be holy and to be as pure in heart as heavenly spirits are, to have all the bands of selfishness broken, and the mind to feel the love of God in every part, to have such a new nature as to find perfect happiness in perfect goodness and truth, — this is the soul's victory. In this world we are redeemed, but not entirely victorious, and it is at the moment of

death that the apostle puts in the mouth of the believer the words, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

That Christian disciple, Frederick Perthes, when near the close of life wrote to his son, "If Paul had to complain of inward conflict, no other need despair because he has to do the same. From the first days, outward methods have been tried to obtain complete victory, and each Christian has had his own special means towards winning this end, but no one has won it. The prayer for help leads to resignation, and resignation purifies the soul, but the fight goes on even to the present time. Let us fight to the last!"

The believer may, in some feeble and imperfect measure, in his best times, when Christ his light is near, be able to conceive of this state of entire victory over, or deliverance from, sin, because he has in the present life yearnings after it, and prophecies of it; but to the unrenewed mind (must it not be so?) this truth is not quite clear. It is, on the contrary, a thought which gives that mind, when it thinks at all, much uneasiness and confusion. For it has had fleeting tastes of sweetness in this earthly life, and in those pleasures into which God does not come, poor though they be, and it fears to lose those alloyed and swift-

passing experiences of happiness in being holy. It would not release entirely its hold upon these, for fear of losing its happiness altogether. But we must let go one to win the other. We must push off from the shore of this world to gain the free shore of eternity; and so complete is the victory of heaven, that not even such an electric thought of evil as has been described, shall pass over the soul. Holiness is happiness. Goodness is joy. Love is freedom. There are no remains of the conflict of temptation. This earth has floated away into the abysses of infinite space. The enemy has vanished, and should he be again admitted into heaven (which is not an irreverent hypothesis as the book of Job testifies), to appeal there to the inalienable freedom which belongs to the human spirit even in its purified and heavenly state, he could hold out no bribe which has any power to charm, or which could turn aside for an instant the holy currents of the soul. The spell of sin is broken; and as freedom is one of those things that never grows old, so the song of heaven shall be a "new song."

But another and higher sense remains, in which it would seem that the song of heaven is called a "new song," arising from the fact that this heavenly freedom which is sung, does not end in ourselves, in our freedom or holiness or joy, but

ends in Christ, and in the divine will in which dwells this pure and mighty power of the soul's deliverance from evil.

The element of newness which we find all through the New Testament, fresh as the breath of spring, comes from the fact of God's having entered into humanity in Christ, changing the lower order of things and the whole course of evil and death. God coming into our nature, appearing in a world that had grown old in sin, opening a totally unlooked-for way of the forgiveness of sin, and of peace, through the sufferings of Christ, sowing broadcast by His spirit the seeds of eternal life in the hearts of suffering and dying men, is an ever new fact, and for aught I know, will be so in eternity, until all evil itself shall pass away from the universe of being.

The salvation of the gospel is not of ourselves, nor at all in the course of nature, reason, or human will (though deeper down not unnatural nor unreasonable), but "it is the gift of God." We are saved by hope, the Scriptures say, by something unexpected, unmerited, wonderful, new, and divine, springing out of the pure love of God, and awakening hope in the hopeless and joy in the sinful.

This truth of the new and divine nature of the gospel of Christ may be one reason why men so

resolutely continue to refuse to receive honestly the gospel, for they will forget nothing old and learn nothing new. They will continue to hold their own ideas. They will not take the truth as a divine gift. They regard it as too extraordinary and mysterious a thing to be saved by the humiliation and sufferings of Christ, by the free love of God. It is out of the course of nature and reason. They doubt the power of God himself to save in it. They refuse the heavenly grace shining in upon them sweet as the summer's sunshine. They cannot comprehend its entire freeness, like the common gifts of nature, and they thus close up the springs of a higher hope within them.

They would themselves achieve something or suffer something. If they cannot do anything else they will make the gospel a hard yoke. They would, by ox-like obedience to the gospel, win heaven. They would buy the free kingdom of the grace of God by some laborious deed, or render some offering whereby one can make himself holy and free.

This divine simplicity of the gospel astonishes men. They do not believe it. Love is always marvellous. It comes to men, when they once love, as something they never knew or heard of before. God is marvellous. The birth of Christ is

marvellous as it was to the shepherds of old. The call of God from heaven to men to leave off wrong-doing at once, and to love God with all their heart and mind and soul and strength, to enter instantly into His kingdom and begin to enjoy the new life therein, to begin to be good as God is good, is a shock to men's preconceived ideas and habits, which a proud and slow heart, and often an utterly selfish life, have generated.

If there were no evil the race would be once more in Eden to keep and till the Lord's garden, and so would every man. This truth of the forgiveness of the soul of all its sins and the freedom of eternal life in God's dear Son, was once to the formalized Jews a stumbling block and to the intellectual Greeks foolishness, and it seems to me sometimes, that there is need in this Christian age and land to preach again the simple doctrine of justification by faith, because we are all naturally rationalists, and wish to be saved by theory rather than by love. We obey because we fear to disobey. We are saved because we are too good not to be. We wish to make it even. We will not be beholden to love.

But this is more and more comprehended in that pure and blessed realm where God's nature is the theme of loving and joyful contemplation; and this is that free element of the kingdom of God

which all the eternities cannot make old, since what is of God and of His will and His love, has in it the principle of eternal life, and forms the ever new song of celestial spirits, for

> "All we do know
> Of what the blessed do above
> Is that they sing and that they love."

VIII.

The Fold of Christ.

VIII.

THE FOLD OF CHRIST.

And there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. — JOHN X. 16.

THE shepherd and the fold are sacred images running through all the holy books; and aside from the Bible, how many soothing allusions are there in literature and life to the idea of the shepherd and his flock! Shakspeare says, —

> "Look, the unfolding star calls up the shepherd,"

and we seem to see the rosy morning light painting out the stars, and brightening the hills and vales of a dark world, bringing new life, hope, and joy to men. How affectingly has the custom of the Alpine shepherd been employed to signify spiritual things, that as he can win the sheep to climb the tremendous mountain precipices to find the sweet, green, hidden pasturage, only by taking their lambs in his arms and carrying them up first, — so the good Lord sometimes takes the children up to Himself, that He may draw the souls of their parents away from earth to heaven! A sick man

once told me that in his long illness he had frequently repeated to himself the Twenty-third Psalm, beginning, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul." And during the days and nights of burning fever, when his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, the words of this Psalm were more restoring and strengthening to him than medicines to his body. The tenth chapter of John is Christ's own use of this image, in some most tender, profound, and extended lessons. He begins by saying, that "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber," — which evidently refers to the ways of men in their attempts to come to God, and to external religions that pass by the spiritual way which Christ pointed out. Soon after, Christ says, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture," — that Christ himself is this means of access to God and His kingdom; and if any man enter through him, the door, by repentance and faith, he shall be saved. The Lord then changes the imagery somewhat, and says, "I am the good shepherd;" and adds, in feeling allusion to the way in which he gives himself to man

through his self-sacrificing life and death, "the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep;" that his death was the method of imparting new spiritual life to a sinful world. He then speaks of the loving relationship that exists between himself and his people, so different from that of the hireling and his flock: "The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." And not for these sheep only, — these Jewish believers and followers, — but for myriads unborn of all nations, peoples, and tongues: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." These are far-reaching words, and we are reminded of what Thomas Carlyle, rough cynic though he be, says of Christ's words: "The most wonderful words I have heard of being uttered by man are those in the Four Evangelists, by Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Their intellectual talent is hardly inferior to their moral. They blend religion and poetry." He could have added Christ's own testimony to the higher import of his sayings: "My words, they are spirit and they are life." They not

only have intellectual beauty, but spiritual power. "*There shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*" We might forget what these words definitely teach, in dwelling upon the reposeful, prophetic, and sublime conception they bring before the mind; and it would be a kindling theme for the imagination to picture that assembling-place where all who love the Lord, out of every earthly kingdom, and from the deadly conflicts of the world, are brought together; where the powerful mind and burning heart meet; where the martyrs, thinkers, doers of the faith, the heroes who have made the world tremble with their lofty victories over error, and the meek, suffering disciples, who have sown love and peace along lowlier paths, are gathered to know as they are known; who are known of Christ himself as belonging to him, for Christ opened this heaven, and "brought life and immortality to light." But these words, "There shall be one fold, and one shepherd," have an immediate and present application; for they comprehend the truth of the existence of the kingdom of God upon earth, since eternal life exists where God is, and "eternal" means that which is of the essence of the divine, from which the limitations of time, space, and place are absolutely excluded; and this kingdom of God, this fold of Christ on earth, is or should be represented, with all its imperfec-

tions, by the church, — by those who have come into the divine life and into the circle of living which is pervaded by the divine spirit. There are those, it is true, who are out of the visible church, who are yet of the fold; and there are those in the church who do not belong to the spiritual fold and have climbed up some other way, and in heart are thieves and robbers, who make gain of godliness; but the church, of all earthly societies, embodies this spiritual truth of "one fold and one shepherd." Not that there is an infallible church that contains an infallible doctrine, but that the true church founded on Christ and his apostles is a community drawn out from the world, who, whether visible or invisible, have, by faith and love, come into the essential truth and spirit of Christ, and received a new life from him; and they are conscious of this new life, so that by their Christlike living they confess him before men. Even then on earth, in the church, this peaceful and glorious truth of "one fold and one shepherd" may be realized, and it implies many distinct and encouraging truths that are profitable to contemplate.

I would try to preach a simple and Biblical sermon, carrying out the natural figure of the text without abstractions, and keeping in view the beautiful symbol of the pastoral life as even now seen

in the East, and in Spain, France, Scotland, England, and the rocky sheep-rearing parts of our green New England.

The fold of Christ's church evidently implies, first of all — unity. There is the coming together of many in one. The text is rendered in the "Revised Version" in a still more compact form, "They shall become one flock, one shepherd," signifying the truth of a drawing into one of all who have experienced the same life, and who rest their hope on the same object of faith. There must be, necessarily, a unity of the faith, or one divine religion, which applies to all men, if indeed they are created by Him who is the One only and true God, and if the religion be also divine as coming from Him, and as being the expression of His will. If there is one God, there is one religion. We have a right to infer that He who made one law of attraction to rule the infinitely complex movements of His physical universe — to controul the pathway of the planet Neptune as it is thrilled by the perturbations of Saturn — would make one law of spiritual movement, harmony, and redemption, governing all possible relations and existences of His spiritual creation; and this simplicity of faith — the love that makes all one — distinguishes the divine religion of Christ from human religions.

The life and glory of human religions lie in the implied assertion that there are as many kinds of belief as there are minds; that the same faith for all minds is impossible and therefore unessential; and that every man should have the largest liberty in following his own way of salvation and of moral perfection. This is the earnest claim of these religions; from which the corollary is that every person should have his own religion, and practise his own theory of coming to God and eternal life. Politically this is true; but spiritually it is untrue. We have Buddhists in the land, who have a perfect right to be here, but they expect to enter heaven through Buddha and not through Christ. In contrast to this many-sided view, we meet the words of Christ, "And there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." There shall not be an everlastingly unsettled diversity of faiths according to men's own capricious wills, but one divine faith; or there shall be in the things of the spirit an essential unity among all who are embraced in the divine fold. There may be many paths leading up to this fold, but there is one fold, and there is one "shepherd and bishop of souls" whose voice the sheep hear in their hearts through and above the confusing voices of the world. His love makes them one, not by a divine decree, but by a divine power and life working in them. All

are united in the love of God. His one spirit is seen in them; and wherever the spirit of division enters, there the human element makes its appearance, — the element of selfishness, of the pride of opinion, and human will. The church is founded on the principle of union, not of separation; and the numerous sects into which the church is split, each distinct and independent, make it in some respects more like a prison than a fold. And yet while one, the faith of the church has varied relations in its teaching and application of the truth to many minds, for "where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," and the selfhood of each mind is inviolate; but I point simply to the fact that all who belong to this fold are one in faith, however variously they clothe it in terms, and with a marked diversity often in various times and lands, as in ancient times or in heathen lands (for the spirit of Christ works in hearts where there is no knowledge of his revelation in the Scriptures); and he has his children in unchristianized as well as so-called Christian countries, and these all have come into the same faith, have drunk into the same love, have passed through the same spiritual experience, have had the sinful, impenitent heart taken from them, and have been made righteous men by the divine power of Christ whether he is known or unknown, and they belong to his

church, receiving of one spirit and one life, — "one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

Respecting the unity of the church of which we are now speaking, there is another word of Christ, of still higher import, that we cannot now comprehend, and that Christians must wait to comprehend hereafter, — it is his prayer that, "All may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Uniting himself by his incarnation to humanity, Christ draws humanity into a participation of the divine; and by virtue of the Son's exaltation, and the unity of believers in him, there is opened a view of the perfection of the soul caught up with Christ into the will, the glory, and the very nature of God, — but the light here grows over strong for mortal eye, and the best and holiest stand like the simple disciples under the blue of the Syrian sky, when they were assembled for the last time before they were scattered abroad like sheep without a shepherd, yet feeling in their hearts the glow of a divine love, and "gazing up into heaven."

The fold of Christ's church implies, again, safety. Those who belong to the fold of Christ are eternally safe from what can harm or destroy the spirit: "By me if any man enter in he shall be saved." The first idea of a fold, which, in the Orient, is a large inwalled area, open to the sky

but shut off from the robber and the beast of prey, is that of security. The painter Millet's well-known picture of the "Sheepfold by moonlight" is wonderfully suggestive of the idea of protecting care amid the vague and wild immensity of the universe. Salvation is written over the low door. The walls about the sheepfold are the arms of divine love. "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Men conscious of their sin, like the jailer of Philippi, who see that life is short and that an untried eternity will soon break upon them, while, it may be, some earthquake of power or calamity is rocking about them, do not care so much for minor questions, but they cry from the deeps, "What must I do to be saved?" This is the natural cry of the awakened spirit: "How can I, with sin in my life and in my heart, come to the infinitely Pure, and have the arms of fatherly forgiveness thrown around me, and know that I am His? Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? You may settle your theological disputes as you please, but my soul searches for the way to the living God and His salvation. Tell me where I can find it." Can, indeed, any human word stand for a moment, in firm inspiring trust and hope, compared with

the answer which is given in the Word of God: "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Christ, the manifestation of divine mercy, is the open door of the sheepfold wherein is perfect salvation from the condemnation and power of sin which he has overcome; from the power of death, because they that are Christ's shall rise with him into new spiritual life; from the power of everything that can hurt the soul. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The fold of Christ's church implies also rest and peace. "There shall be one fold and one shepherd." These words seem to breathe a divine peace. The spirit seeking peace shall be everlastingly folded. Not many folds, not many

shepherds, is the distracting thought of the soul, — pulling it here, and pulling it there, — but one fold and one shepherd. Many persons — showing how unbased and all afloat are their religious beliefs — are in a chaotic state of mind, although living in later days of Christian faith. Old faiths have crumbled, and new faiths are found insufficient. They go from teacher to teacher; they gather only more doubt and more distress from arguments, books, and men's sayings; they change the place, and not the pain. The vague sense of not finding the true cure of human sin creates this unhappy condition; and blessed is it, if at this point the peaceful fold of Jesus is presented to the eye as a city set on a hill. There, the sinful will yielded, and the spirit reconciled to the Father through the Son, it finds peace. There is "peace in believing," — not in thinking, feeling, giving, or doing. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." There is an immediate, profound, and real rest for the soul in leaving all that perpetually fails it, and trusting the divine Word, the divine Work, the divine Love, and being folded forever in Christ. Coming up out of the low, narrow enclosures of men, continually varying, broken down and invaded, the soul enters into the one high, firm, and peaceful fold

of God, above life's storms, and there is everlasting rest. "The kingdom of God is joy and peace." The shepherd who stands in the midst of the fold says, "My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The fold of Christ's church implies, once more, the supply of all wants. "By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." The human mind is wonderful in its infinite desires. It has wants which the world cannot meet; it hungers and thirsts after righteousness, and there is nourishment for those wants in the fold of Christ. There is a Shepherd who knows his sheep, and has called them by name, and who understands their individual needs, and can lead them into the heavenly pastures. God Himself shall feed them. In Christ is the perfection of our humanity, and we are made complete in Him. We are, indeed, commanded to be perfect as God is perfect, and believers are forbidden no good thing; for all things minister to their power and good, and they are led by the Spirit deeper and deeper into truth; and the fold of the church is the place appointed for their instruction in righteousness and their nourishment in divine things. Perpetual growth is the law of their spiritual life: "I am

come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Christians are not kept back from anything that serves to nurture the whole man and to develop all his powers, — whatever is true, pure, beautiful, and good, — knowledge, science, art, thought, happiness, joy, and life, everything that is manifested of God. Nature, rightly read, is an outward symbol of the Divine Love and Beauty, and the earth is full of the beauty of the Lord to those who have the open eye to see the divine perfection. They are stimulated to seek and ask. They are conducted by the Good Shepherd beside the living waters of everlasting truth, and up the heights of divine wisdom; and still there are higher fields and greener spots and more hidden pastures far up the mountain of God.

The fold of Christ's church implies, yet again, fellowship or communion. How many times in Palestine and in Spain I have seen a shepherd going on with free strides before his flock, not driving them, but they following him in a compact body as if they loved him, — as if they were drawn along by a cord fastened in their hearts! Christ's heart was a heart of love. He purposed to rear on the earth a human brotherhood, a society, pervaded by his own loving spirit, which should be the nursery of the world's higher train-

ing and spiritual reformation. He therefore does not allow his disciples to live a separate and unloving life, neither does he require them to live an ascetic life, but rather one of "sweet reasonableness" and of affectionate communion in all its relations with other men. Religion is not all of the head, but it is also of the heart: Love is not an intellectual faculty to be reasoned upon, but it is a feeling which expresses itself in true sympathy, — in sorrowing in others' sorrows and rejoicing in their joys, showing a brother's heart to men and acting the ready friend to aid them in their difficulties, and to assist them over the hard places of life to a better life here and beyond. And, above all, there should be this fellowship in the church; for Christians are not permitted to live away from the common table and the common altar, "If we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sins." And what a high fellowship! These are they, if there be any on earth, who form one loving brotherhood. They may be independent in original characteristics, like the gnarled oak that grows on the mountain; but their hearts are one. They flow into each other. The bond of a true society runs through them, and that is love. This bond of brotherly Christian union, Neander

tells us, was supposed by the ancient Romans to be a secret compact, which the police tried in vain to discover; neither can the worldly mind or worldly sagacity fathom it now, — for the church of Christ have one uniting object of confidence and affection which is hid from the world, made blind by reason of its unbelief. "So we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another," — a union which grows more and more perfect, like the unity of an expanding and well-knit body by an in-working law of life. The true church of Christ is the only successful and perfectly united society upon the earth, since its differences are human and temporary, while its union is divine and eternal.

The fold of Christ implies, lastly, training for service. "And when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, and they know his voice." There is everything in the words, "and the sheep follow him." They follow him in his life of pure goodness, since Christianity, in its essence, is goodness, — goodness of spirit, goodness of action, goodness of life. Christ leads man away from all unrighteousness and into every good activity, — into the enlarged subdual of their evil lusts and the fulness of the obedience and service of God. Christ trains his followers to be like himself, and would have

his church carry on his work. He has a service for each and all to do, and to do it through their united effort. They that come into his fold must serve him unreservedly; for he leads over rough and (without him) inaccessible paths. It is not merely for salvation, but for action, he calls his own out of the world. Now his kingdom is a fold, and now a vineyard. It is a fold for the supply of divine strength, and a vineyard for the putting forth of human energy. He who follows Christ is continually striving for the better service of God, is ever going about doing good, and delivering all world-entangled souls, and delivering his own soul by so doing. As is the shepherd so are the sheep. As the Shepherd laid down his life for others, — for those even who hated him, — so his disciples should have the unselfish spirit that is willing to lay down life for others. The altruistic philosophy of the day is sometimes claimed as a new and extraordinary discovery, the last and greatest in ethics, but what there is true in it is at least as old as Christianity, whose principle is, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister;" and no one is rightfully in the fold who does not, in some sense, even if his faith be small, partake of that self-sacrificing spirit that was the Master's. This is the sign of discipleship: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit

the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." The lesson which every Christian has learned who has felt the power of Christ as a vital principle, is the willing, loving, entire sacrifice of self for the good, and eternal good, of others. It needed not even Thomas à Kempis to say, "Everything for the love of God," comprehending in this love of God also the love of man and the disposition to give up everything for others; for this was first enunciated by Christ, and came from him as its source.

Welcome those who desire to enter the fold of Christ from the world! Welcome to the peaceful home, the abundant provision, the happy society, the loving service, the pure joys, of the spiritual fold of Jesus! Welcome to a substantial peace and a real salvation, — a salvation in spirit, character, and life! Remember that you are saved by Christ from all unrighteousness; therefore contend against every evil desire to the last moment! Remember that your rest is not in ease, but in believing, loving, and serving. Never forget him who nourishes the spirit in good, nor be ashamed of the Shepherd who gave himself for you that you might live to him. Never so rejoice as when you can do or bear anything for him. Strive to "know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made

conformable unto his death;" and hearing his voice bidding you "come up higher," stay not starving and pining in the low places, but rise into the higher life, the larger fields of joy and service, the perfect salvation; and so truly know Christ that you may come at length into his heavenly fold, his presence, light, and love, and with all God's children through eternity "there shall be one fold and one Shepherd!"

IX.

Love of an Unseen Saviour.

IX.

LOVE OF AN UNSEEN SAVIOUR.

Whom not having seen, ye love. — 1 PETER i. 8, part of verse.

LOVE is fed by the imagination, and thrives even in absence. We may get some faint conception of the soul's power of loving what is not seen, when one to whom we were bound by every tie and who was worthy of our best affection has been taken from us by death and passes into the unseen world; and, when we have nothing sensible to dwell upon, no line or feature, we begin to see, — indistinctly at first, but soon more clearly, — the character of the friend purified of earthly imperfections and fixed in the spiritual sphere; we see the real man; he rises before us clothed in immortal beauty, and we love him with pure, unselfish love. You say that this is the work of the imagination, of that representative faculty by which we view unseen things as real when prompted and stirred by the affections. It may be so; and truly the example is by no means a parallel one to that presented in the apostle's

words applied to the risen Saviour, "whom not having seen, ye love;" for not only is the divine here distinguished from the human, but, unlike the disciple Peter, who writes of loving an unseen Lord, the believer to whom he writes, and the believer now, has never seen Christ "in the flesh," nor known the personal magnetism of his presence; and before he has seen him, yet believing, he loves him with unbounded affection.

Let me say, in order to guard against misapprehension, that although since Christ has withdrawn his bodily presence and ascended to heaven we are called upon to love an unseen Saviour, yet it is not by a blind faith. If faith do not require sight, it does not by any means deny sight. There is nothing in Christian faith which contemns proof addressed to reason; for if we ourselves have not seen Christ in the flesh, others have seen him and testified of him, and no one impugns their testimony. The life of Christ belongs to history. The historical proof concerning Jesus, who lived at the meeting-point of the three great civilizations, the Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, and in the well-known period of the beginnings of the Roman Empire, which to some minds is a strong proof (everything at the present day being looked at from an historic point of view), it surely behooves a thoughtful man to weigh it; for let opponents of Christian-

ity say what they will, they have to account for Christianity itself, and what it has wrought in the race's civilization; and which already

> "Has cast the kingdoms old
> Into another mould."

But the argument of Christianity is not historic, or the establishing of a fact; neither is it philosophic, whose theoretic statement is a matter of opinion and capable of being demonstrated by reasoning; but it is rather vital and cumulative, it is a life that has progress not to be closed until the human race has ceased. It is the life of God in the soul of man. Is it, then, incapable of proof? Perhaps so! if moral and spiritual truth cannot be proved. The burden of proof, however, lies upon its assailant, since Christianity is not a theology whose verification is the object of reasoning, for it does not need reasoning to know God or love Him; nor does Christianity arrogate to itself philosophic unity; but, in the words of its Founder, it points to its results, — "the tree is known by its fruits;" and when these words were said they did not have in a human point of view the force they now have, because what then was potential is now real.

In Christian faith there is, indeed, proof for head and heart, though the form in which intel-

lectual evidence presents itself varies. We have, in this age, moved away from the dialectic methods of the Reformation, and from the style of dialectic argumentation that, in the last two centuries, tried severely the reasoning powers. Pascal's "almost hatred of reason" would not now be required; nor do questions such as the good Bishop of Natal has more recently raised, trouble us; but the Christian evidence, or much of it, is, nevertheless, a strong kind of proof, though it differs from common proof concerning common things. It is not the same that we apply to the solution of a scientific problem, or a question of political economy. It is a higher kind of testimony. It rises from the material to the moral, and addresses us chiefly upon the moral side of the nature; which also must be opened to receive it, since the knowledge of God depends upon the state of the heart, and divine truth cannot be comprehended without a preparation that brings the mind into moral union with the truth. If a man with ever so acute mind, as David Friedrich Strauss, chooses to see myths, he will see them; and nothing but these shadowy forms will fill his mental vision, obscuring the form of the Son of God. And if we really prefer to dwell in this twilight when the sun is up, we are at liberty to do so. The evidences of Christ's risen life, filling heaven

with its light and earth with its fruit, are as manifest as the sun, and its warmth is felt by all souls who open themselves to receive it! Men who must have a higher life, and who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" find in Christ the bringer of this divine life. His renovating influences correspond to their wants: and there is the highest reason in that (however any of us may fail to comprehend it) which supplies the demands of the spiritual nature. Christ meets these demands of our nature, which is the strongest argument that can be addressed to a rational being, who asks for no dramatic Saviour, but for one who has the key of life and death, and can unlock the massive problems of evil, and redemption, and the future life, against which the mind in its agony beats itself. Men have to face the fact of their moral imperfection. With a nature that requires perfection they cry out for some light-bearer to guide and deliver them,—who, above Nature, can bring into their nature a new force and purity, and at the same time, by union with them, constitutes himself a human brother and awakes sympathy as an object to be loved; for every human heart must have such a higher object to love, and he who can fill it is no unreal Saviour, though unseen.

This spiritual Saviour, thus demanded by our soul's necessities, is set before us in the divine

word; and of this word, even of its preparatory and more ancient portion, the Old Testament, poor Heinrich Heine, tossing on a bed of pain, and at times titanically audacious in his impiety, said: "Vain words, vain tests of all human judgment. It is God's work like a tree, like a flower, like the sea, like man himself; it is the word of God, that and no more."

The manner in which this word, or testimony and testament of Christ, came into being, is as simple as the light when it dawns out of the night, and yet as mysterious and profound. Plain men, who drew nets and worked with their hands to gain their livelihood, without consulting with one another, without acting upon a concerted plan, collected together and wrote down for the instruction of other disciples as humble as themselves, what they saw of Jesus of Nazareth, what they remembered of his words and acts every day while they were with him on earth, — at the marriage feast of Cana and the burial of Bethany, in Judea and Galilee, in the country among the vineyards and cornfields, in the fishing-boat and by the shore of the inland sea, in the surging ocean of the great metropolis, in civil scenes and at the private board, in hours of joy and of sorrow, in life and death, — and putting these together we have the portrait of a true yet unique, yes, perfect

man.[1] Never was such a one before or since portrayed. They did it, simply, because they had the perfect model to copy; the Greek sculptor made the perfect statue, which we wonder at but cannot equal, because he had the Greek form, developed by athletic discipline, before him. They also unconsciously painted the halo of divinity about the head of this humble but perfect man; it shot forth irresistible rays of Godhead, and they who saw Him saw the Father; they who heard Him heard the Father.

It is delightful, after reading the Scriptures with earnest attention and communing with the word and truth of Christ, to find that in our own spirit his claims are felt to be true. We have an inner proof, affirming and even rising beyond the outward testimony, which seems like a ladder set up against the sky, an instrumentality by which we

[1] Shelley, notwithstanding the immense errors of his life and opinions, was impressed, as a man of genius must be, by the character of Christ. His biographer makes him say: "Christ appears the most important of all religious teachers, abiding in closest harmony with that Spirit of energy and wisdom which is the ruling power of the universe; a poet and a thinker, interpreting to us the highest truths; the enemy of falsehood and oppression; of meek and majestic demeanour; calm in danger; of natural and simple habits; beloved to adoration by his adherents; unmoved, solemn, and severe; yet gentle and benign." How much further would he have to go to say — perfect. Some who doubt seem hardly to realize that fallible men can testify of the perfect when they tell the simple truth about it.

have climbed to a heavenly truth, and then the truth itself fills our hearts, and bears witness by its own joyful reality. This inward witness leads further and higher than that of the written record. It leads us to the true friend of the soul, the invisible source of life and light, the human brother but divine Lord, the Beloved, the Adored!

I have often thought it must have been this Christian consciousness which was the secret power that supported the early church amid its incredible trials in planting the Christian faith. They were conscious of a new divine light within them, of a new divine strength that led them on, and that Jesus himself was always with them and in them, just as he promised he would be, even to the end of the world.

While thus we love him with the best love of our hearts, we also confidently trust him in what he claims concerning himself, and we recognize him in his varied and glorious offices. We see him especially (because that touches our humanity) as Saviour, as one who for the great love he bore us incarnated himself in our nature and died for us, and rose again for our eternal life. We do not need repeated argument to establish this affecting truth, that makes its appeal to the needs and affections of the soul. Are we to be thrusting the spear into the bleeding side to prove that

he died for our sins? Are we to be feeling around in the empty sepulchre to discover that he rose from it? If such a being had power to lay down his life he had power to take it again, and he has risen. He was before in little Judea; now by his spirit he is in the whole world. This rough world feels the softening effect of his spiritual presence. It breathes in every good influence, and energizes every good act. Hid from the proud and unreceptive, meek and loving hearts know He is here. He is an ever-present, gracious, and powerful Saviour to every tempted soul that puts its trust in him, and is just such a One as the disappointed and famishing affections of a nature made for God's love, may lay hold of with everlasting love.

I would remark that the love of an unseen Saviour shows the beginnings of true nobility of character. It plants a conception of Perfect Beauty in the mind. It regards Goodness in the idea, deprived of external form. It kills selfishness, which is the mean and little thing about a man. Faith must be the great act of the mind, if it is, as Dr. Arnold of Rugby says of it, "a preference of unseen good to what seems good at the moment." This demands the heroism of self-sacrifice, it demands in some sense a spurning of this life to win a better. There can be nothing great without a spark of faith. There is no originality in a scien-

tific man who does not trust, whose mind does not throw itself upon the bolder hypothesis.

In religious things the mind may have proof, but faith is the uncalculating act that hazards all upon a venture of love. How many there are among us of whom it might be said, "they had every other gift but wanted love;" and until love is awaked, a man lies in the lowness and narrowness of a sensual nature; for, as love is the nature of God, so it is of His children, and this is the infallible criterion. This spirit of love, which is the spirit of Christ the Son, which loves God above all things, which loves Him infinitely, is more easily recognized than described; but its absence is a fatal thing; for the deepest principle of the new birth is in the divine quality of the heart. Love is the root of righteousness, and while a change of moral character is wrought, love is the effective principle.

A man, therefore, should not undertake to prove his religion. He need not array reasons for the love of God so as to love Him. He who has an immortal within him must trust to that which speaks to his best reason, his noblest affections, — that part of him which responds to and is played upon by spiritual influences, which can comprehend and love God. In a materialistic age, when all is brought to a scientific test, religion catches the

infection, and the most spiritual thing that is, denies its nature, and strives, like science (which, in its place, I honour as highly as any one), for a display of material proof, forgetting the spiritual testimony of faith which is "the evidence of things not seen." "We are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope." God's love to our souls is revealed in His Son, who is the Spirit of God working in us, who is the Divine Good dwelling in our souls; and if we do not respond to this divine love, and put our loving confidence in this spiritual Saviour, above the thoughts or proofs of the logical understanding, what else can fill our hearts, can stir their depths and call forth their abiding faith? "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." These form an elect and blessed company who have ventured their all upon the Lord, and who have yielded to love alone, which is the most generous motive that can move natures and which allies us to the divine. They are the children of God by faith, who have not required of God such proof as could not and should not be given; who have broken down walls; who have taken heaven by violence; who have pierced through and known the divine Redeemer amid the obscurations, sorrows, and sufferings of His human nature; who have loved where they have not seen!

I would desire, especially, to convey to you, Christian brethren, and to myself, the friendly exhortation that believers, those who live in the faith and love of the Lord, and are led by his presence, should strive ever to abide in the circle of His spiritual strength, and not to sink back into the sensual sphere. They should keep their hope pure. This is their glorious distinction that they love an unseen Saviour. They alone among mortals have had the higher reason and the spiritual instinct to do this. The Invisible One gives them eternal life. He floods their inner nature with his divine presence. But when Christians, who are the children of God by faith, bar their minds to the influences of God's love, and become self-dependent, and strive for holiness by hard ways, — by the labour-and-wage system and by what they themselves can do and are, — and grow suspicious in their religious life, and continually demand evidence of things unseen that are eternal and cannot be projected into time, and live on the husks of human arguments, and require clearer light on this doctrine, and shrink from that duty until they see the way brighter, and, like the Pharisee and Levite, shut up their compassions against their suffering fellow-men wherever found, whether in their own station of life or the "slums" of a great city, because they

are not quite sure of the ground they tread upon, and are jealous even of a brother Christian, and will not join hands with him in work and fellowship because he belongs to another ecclesiastical camp, — they are walking by sight, or, rather, are going down into the emptiness of the tomb from which Christ has risen, and groping in it. They are plunging back into foulness and darkness and death. They are forsaking the simplicity of the gospel. They are leaving the lofty pathway of life, and faith, and love.

When, too, we see Christian disciples running invariably to books and human teachers to help them in their doubts and difficulties, then we may be sure they are beginning to walk by sight; they are leaving prayer; they are deserting the fountain of living waters and hewing out for themselves with bone-shattering labour cisterns that hold no water; they are no more led by the Spirit; they are not simply trusting and loving an unseen Saviour, and walking in the light that streams from His inner glory. Men, who are seen, are not to be authoritative teachers, are not to be objects of supreme love and confidence. How poor such guides! Christ, who is unseen, and who perfectly knows and loves us, is the only Master that can be implicitly followed.

When Christians are becoming faint-hearted,

and are sinking under their conflicts and sorrows, as half-drowned men are submerged effortless and lifeless beneath the waves, and are losing the great hope of living for God in this life, then they are living by sight, they are leaving the love of Christ on which they should rest, and to which they should cling with deathless grasp.

But it may be asked earnestly by those who desire, above all things, to know the truth, how we can best show our love to an unseen Lord and Friend? It is a difficult matter and beyond human strength to be loving that which we cannot see, to be worshipping and straining after some unattained ideal. It is like searching through many lands, as did the knights of old, for the "Holy Grail." It is pursuing some supernal form of beauty too pure for sinful eye to behold or hand to touch. But, I reply, we can see Him so long as we have true faith. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." We can have a sight of Him by that inner spiritual eye that looks clearly into the divine. We cannot, indeed, show our love to the unseen Saviour, simply by talking, or writing, or preaching fine things about it. "Words are the daughters of earth, but things are the sons of God." Most Christians are, perhaps, inclined to this stereotyped sentimentalism of expression about Jesus, in song, prayer, letter,

book, and conversation, which they do not always feel, and which the stern blows of real trial cleave off. This will not lead us beyond the vestibule, and it cannot bring into the interior of the temple where the King is in his beauty.

We could not, perhaps, describe in a word how one may show his love to his Lord, better than by saying that he does this by doing that which Christ requires of him, and by living a Christlike life. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." But in order to obey Christ's commands, it becomes necessary to renounce the love of self and to take up the cross that Christ bore before us. It is necessary to beat down manfully earthly passions; to give up selfish interests; to cast away cowardly thoughts and doubts, and to rise above the level of the temper and spirit of the world into the will of God, and to know that religion is goodness, is self-sacrificing goodness drawn from the spirit of Christ. How do we know that we love Christ? How do we know that we love any one?

We have, indeed, a very good proof that we love Christ when it is happiness to deny ourselves to do His will, to act in particular cases with a

practical honesty which cuts into our hearts like a knife and makes them bleed. We have a testimony within ourselves that we love the unseen Lord, when unholy things grow distasteful, and righteousness, truth, and the great things of the heavenly life become the peaceful abode of the spirit, when He who is our hope fills us with the brightness of eternal hope, when the sweet peace of God abides in our hearts though around this calm inner life roars the wild storm.

When we are willing to live not so much for ourselves, but in others' lives; to love God in men; to raise up those who are beneath to our level; to enrich the poor with aid and sympathy; to give to those who can make no return, or at least from whom we expect no return; to abandon the worldly principle of caste and to show the brother's heart to all, black and white, Jew, heathen and Christian, heretic and believer, day-labourer and rich man, ignorant and educated, disagreeable and pleasant, saint and sinner, those who love us not as well as those who love us,—not only to live for others but, if need be, to be willing to die for others, to lose life, and to do this not in the spirit of pride, as if to hand something from a higher step down to those on a lower step, but in humility, knowing our own imperfection, unworthiness, and sin, and in true love and

manly sincerity, — then we show that the spirit of Christ has somehow passed into us, and His love has taken up its dwelling in us.

This is a love which loves all things in God, and feels that all things are filled with God, and that His loving spirit dwells in all. This is a faith which comes out like gold thrice tried from the furnace; and, even in this life, in the hard things we undergo, the unaccountable sorrows and temptations, the blows, disappointments, tempests of change and loss that beat like hail on our heads, and when everything outward seems deprived of its light, this love lives and sings, for it sees Him who is invisible; it dwells with Him in the depths of the soul; it is at peace with Him in His changeless peace; it knows an inward joy which is satisfying and divine, even as the disciple Peter felt when he wrote to "the strangers" scattered abroad in the Pagan provinces of Asia Minor who loved the unseen Lord, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing [manifestation] of Jesus Christ, whom not having seen, ye love, in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

HORÆ HOMILETICÆ.

HORÆ HOMILETICÆ.

I WILL try to answer such questions as are sent to me upon the well-worn though great subject of preaching, reserving the right to make from them a selection; and shall address myself mainly to younger preachers and students, not caring or presuming to teach older heads; endeavouring to follow the counsel of a clever Athenian in one of Plato's dialogues: "Let him carry on the discussion by means of questions and answers, and not after each question make a long speech evading the point at issue, and not troubling himself to answer, but rambling on until most of his hearers have forgotten what the argument is about."

Is preaching on morality to be encouraged?

Assuredly. It is not all, but it forms a valuable department of preaching, if, indeed, it be drawn from a divine source, and is not a morality which moves on a natural plane merely. While Aristotle's ethics have hardly been improved upon in their analysis and philosophy, Christianity added the idea of love, transforming ethics into religion. But I never like to hear morality, for any reason, run down in the pulpit. Matthew Arnold, while in some of his utterances he declares that there is little probability that God is a person who thinks and loves, still conceives of God as

the Eternal that makes for righteousness, as if this were the foundation idea of what is divine. The conception of God corresponds to and comprehends the idea of right. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of righteousness. "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son." He is the revelation of God, who is the pure, the righteous One, in man — in humanity. Ethical preaching is setting forth the divine law of righteousness as applied to human life in all its phases and acts, whether outward or inward. It has, like duty, of which it treats, two sides to it, God and man These are both truly one, and are comprised in the law of love which the Saviour proclaimed, and which is the essence of the gospel that led to suffering for the good of others. Without this ethical element, preaching loses its relation to human interests. It is a thing of philosophy. The sermon becomes an end, not a means. It is preached to be talked of, criticised, and widely reported, — as if it were of any importance in itself. The Lord's house becomes a temple to man's intellectual glorifying. We seem to hear the pointed words of the prophet: "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

If much of sublimated preaching should be transformed

into a preaching that has a human life in it, that beats with a human heart, that feels for human wants, that seeks men out in their sins, that contends against the actual evil in human nature, that comes home to men's business and bosoms, it would have a more living power. As it is, it often beats the air of vain speculation. It winnows logical chaff. It weaves a rhetorical many-coloured web in the morning, which it unravels at night. If its theology had only a moral basis of divine truth and sober earnestness; if it turned men into the active currents of doing good, of destroying (as Christ came into the world to do) all the works of the devil, of visiting the sick, of wisely aiding the poor, of promoting honesty in trade, of purifying politics, of reconstructing the criminal classes, of staying the tides of intemperance and prostitution in our cities, of carrying light and health into the unreclaimed moral wastes in the midst of us, it would be more like the gospel first published, — the evangel of good will to men. It would bring in the new year of God. It would result in the real reform of human society, the State and the world. The gospel in its essence is ethical and practical. The Bible is a practical book, and is at this moment better understood and more intelligently interpreted than ever before, being looked at as written, not by inspired machines, but by living men, who were in the midst of life, and were earnestly seeking how to live righteously, as the subjects of God's moral kingdom. It meets these questions of conscience and every-day living, and is a human as well as a divine book. The scope of Christian preaching may be described as sweeping the whole circumference of humanity, of which God

himself is the centre. We have now the ugly problem of socialistic communism confronting us in America, as it does the people of Europe; communism from a selfish point of view. But Christ taught in his gospel a communism of all the best interests of humanity in the light of the higher law of love, of the centre of communion in God; the inference being direct and irresistible, that the great Christian principle of brotherhood is to guide us in the most difficult questions which concern the common life of our sinful and suffering humanity. The true preacher is united to every man by the kinship of Christ's renewing love, and suffers with him as a brother; he has "an enthusiasm for humanity." Should we indeed succeed in secularizing government and secularizing society, we should then have a system of political economy which would be without the gospel in it, which would be without the renewing moral element of Christian love, and which would be as powerless on all questions of political and soical evil, — such as chronic pauperism, public licentiousness, tramps, prison discipline, the degraded and criminal classes, — as on questions of common morality in business, in neighbourly intercourse, in the ordinary affairs of human life and in politics. The axiom of civil reform that "politics are morals comprehensively enforced" is a true one. Morality ought to be preached from every pulpit in the land, with much more clearness and iteration than it is done, and with a deeper penetration into the motives of conduct and character, or our preaching will become more and more like a Sunday song, — pleasant to the ear, and chiming with the opera-music at the other end of the church.

Which is the better system for making preachers: the Jesuit, or the Protestant?

This is a pregnant question, and cannot be answered offhand. It brings two great methods of religious training, of training for efficiency in religious achievement — the repressive and expressive, if they might be so-called — face to face. It is lawful to learn from our enemies. The Jesuit seminary system is a drastic one. It makes strong men. Its pupil (I speak of the best type) aims at complete self-renunciation; he withdraws from the world and consecrates himself to God; his heart cries with St. Francis Xavier, "*Amplius, amplius* — more, O Lord, yet more!" The Jesuit novice, though he may have been a rich youth, presents himself to the Superior, saying, "I am a poor man come to ask your hospitality. I have nothing but myself to offer." He takes the four sacred vows of the Jesuit order before the canonical time: namely, those of poverty, chastity, obedience, and entire submission to the will of the Pope — to stay, do, and go, as he may command. He makes haste, as I quote from a Jesuit writer, "to go down into the mystic tomb, where, as St. Paul expresses it, one must put off the old man to put on the new. He disappears as though dead; for ten years the world sees him no more, hears not his name, speaks not of him." His seminary life is a decade of religious incarceration, where, by deeper and deeper steps into that living tomb, the minister that is to be becomes, in Jesuit phrase, "*perinde cadaver*" to the world and human joys and affections. His constant companion is the "*Exercitia Spiritualia*" of St. Ignatius, by the study and observance of which he hopes to con-

quer every sinful affection and worldly desire. This is a book of dry directions, of military rules, with little of scriptural language or thought, or even of devotional matter; by the following of whose prescriptions with an unreasoning fidelity, and under the supervision of a skilled director, the thoughts are forced into one channel; the senses are repressed, as it were extinguished; the most interior operations of the mind are inspected and annotated; the gradual recurrence of wrong desires is reduced day by day to a minimum, till one after another the evil inclinations of the mind are abolished, and the man becomes holy and perfect. So it is claimed. By his own efforts, with the help of the book, the man does this work. It is a self-immolation. It is the deliberate suicide of every natural feeling, and a literal death to the interests of the common life of humanity. Sequestrated for ten years, the youth emerges from his solitude a man of iron will, of impenetrable mind, of a religion apparently without an earthly tie, his mind fixed on one idea, or *eidolon*, — that of the Church, of serving the Church and the Society of Jesus. He has submitted his free-will to a system, doing nothing spontaneously, reducing his life to one word — *obedience*. Yes, whatever we have to criticise, there is a virility here which we cannot but admire.

The intellectual training of the Jesuit seminary is no less remarkable than the moral. It tends to make habile instruments. Oratory, or the art of persuasive speech, is sedulously cultivated. Rhetorical praxis and criticism by the whole seminary — exercises in the management of the voice and delivery of sermons — are very searching

and severe. The style of preaching, which is the result of such training, while it has great power over the passions from its own self-poised knowledge, is bold, argumentative, and masculine, chiefly addressed to the intellect and aimed at practical results. It is no reed shaken by the wind. Where there is want of erudition there is that depth of knowledge and energy of will which carry force. The language is popular, but rarely low. Many great bishop-preachers, as well as orators of Notre Dame, have been the fruits of this training. The powerful and popular preachers of the "Redemptorists" of New York, who can talk without notes straight to their hearers' minds and hearts, have come out of this method.

The New Testament — I would say it with no scornful feeling toward a society which numbers so many saints, missionaries, and martyrs — seems like blessed daily sunshine compared to the cavernous gloom of the system of Loyola. Its method of self-introspection, accompanied by the austerities of a monastic age, cannot be the way of preparation to preach the humane and loving Christ. We do not find light or strength by exploring the springs of selfishness and impurity in our own hearts, but must, by an exercise of faith, look away from ourselves to him who "is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Perfection lies only that way. Besides, Christ said that his disciples were not to be taken out of the world, but kept from its evil; that, in using the powers, affections, and desires of our being — regulating and purifying, and not repressing or killing them — we are to serve him best who made us in his image. Celibacy of the clergy was the offshoot of Manichean phi-

losophy, and did not belong to the early Church; the Greek Church never wholly gave in to it; and the Roman itself only by degrees, cutting off its priesthood from human sympathies. A man, even an apostle, has duties to his parents, his brethren, it may be his wife and children, the State and the world, which he cannot repudiate without wrong. Christ did not do so. How did he train his disciples to preach? He did not send them into the caves of Engedi or tombs of Gadara to spend ten years in ascetic exercises and spiritual contemplations, but, after keeping them with himself in order to be made one with him in spirit and to learn what his gospel is, as he went about doing good, he commanded them to go into all the world and preach that gospel of glad tidings to men, and he would be with them and inspire their love and energy. The life of a Protestant minister, holding forth the Word of God week after week in the pulpit, going constantly among his people, now and then drawn into a moral or political discussion, distinguished by no badge or dress from his fellow-citizens, living much as other men do and calling no man master but Christ; making no special profession of sanctity, but showing a Christly spirit of love to all, and moved by a life "hid with Christ in God," — this seems more like Christ's example. It is natural, while drawing from higher spiritual sources. Every human feeling and affection finds an expression; every power is developed; and here the Protestant Seminary, set in the heart of human interests, is more in consonance with the expansive freedom of the gospel than the Jesuit method. It is not a cloistered society, but a little world of thought

and activity, penetrated by the healthy currents of common life. Its range of studies may with profit be made more practical, humanistic, and comprehensive. Protestant learning, which has broken away from the bonds of a rigid system of dogmatic teaching based upon the authority of infallible tradition, gives scope to independent investigation, and opens the door to something like real progress in theological science.

Yet notwithstanding the superior excellence, as a general rule, of Protestant seminaries, both in theory and practice; notwithstanding the marked ability with which they are often guided, they may learn some lessons from the Jesuit system: 1. To cultivate in young men an energetic and virile character. The aim of seminaries should be to make strong men, to weld in them an iron will to do anything and go anywhere, and endure hardness, despising worldly gain and ease. They are especially the soldiers (*milites*), the trained militia of Christ's army. Students in seminaries should gather up their energy and will-power for grand effort. They are certainly to be aided in all real difficulties, spiritual and intellectual, — perhaps, to some extent, secular. They may be helped over hard places, but never where they can surmount these themselves; otherwise, their moral forces are enfeebled, their muscles are relaxed, the incentive for personal effort is removed, the tone of high, manly, vigorous character is insensibly lowered, if not prostrated. The time, it may be, has come, when the beneficiary system of our theological schools is to be judiciously reconsidered, and when young men are to be thrown more entirely upon their own resources, or at

least placed upon the same footing with students of other professional schools. There should be no bid for ministers from any pecuniary motive whatever. This idea should be put out of the question. He who has it in his heart to preach Christ will find the way. He is not an indigent student and should never suffer himself to be so called, who possesses and studies the riches of God's truth. The strong voice that cried in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord, came from one whose seminary was the Holy Spirit, who lived on God's hand and spake the message God gave him, without fear or favour of man before his eyes. They must be strong who are to be leaders of men, and they must have the courage of their convictions. The preacher, to be strong, should be capable of self-controul and self-abnegation. Resolve comes before action. He who would save the world must first save himself from the power of selfishness, and bring his will in union with the will of God, and thus enter into the divine spirit of love for a world which he

> "Will heal, if healing may be found,
> By uttermost renouncing and strong strife."

However lamentably and profoundly far we, as individual ministers, may feel ourselves to be from the mark, we know that, unless there be this spirit of complete self-consecration to the Master, renouncing all joyfully for him, with no doubt about it, the cause of the advance of Christianity in our country, north and south, east and west, will undergo disaster, as if the leaders of the host should suffer blindness. From the coarse materialism of anti-Christian sophists, or the refined material-

ism of religious form in the churches, or the still subtler materialism of a proud intellectual philosophy, or, above all, the deadly corruption of money and idolatry of riches, or from these and other more hidden causes combined, Christ himself may be expelled from the land, as was the case in the Roman Empire when the high martyr faith of the early Apostolic Church, springing warm and pure from the love of a personal, living Christ, was exchanged for a religion of dead externalism and abstract creed. 2. We should aim after quality rather than numbers in theological students; selecting the able and skilful instruments, if they be fewer; there may be too many ministers if they are not the best. 3. We should impart not only learning, but wisdom and tact, — the power of dealing with and catching men. Our seminaries have a tendency to become scholastic institutions, so much so that some think the old system of family theological schools, under the care of individual ministers of repute, were better; but I am not of this way of thinking, so that the evil spoken of be corrected. The age has gone by for private schools of learning; and the well-equipped seminary, if it do not close its doors to, and lose its hold upon popular sympathies, is a more favourable place for thorough study, for broad, quickening, and generous culture of mind and heart. 4. We should train young men carefully in oratory, in the art of forcible, persuasive speech, and especially of *extempore* speaking, which is the only method of wielding a personal, powerful, and instantaneous influence over great masses. 5. We should require a higher standard and more strictness in examinations both for entrance and degree. 6. We should

mingle the meditative or devotional and the practical elements, and exercise the greatest care in the moral culture of students, — in all the finer laws of honourable Christian conduct. 7. We should cultivate the spirit of devotion to missionary work. The "Missioner" of the Episcopal Church (now claiming to be the most living Church in the world), who is doing such a good and forward work of attack upon the unchristianized minds in American cities and society, what is he but the Jesuit missionary in Protestant form and of purer faith? He has the same spirit of devotion to aggressive missionary work, be it in Europe or America, Thibet or China. 8. We should avoid the Jesuit spirit of intrigue and management, from which even Protestant ministerial minds may not be exempt, since a profession that deals chiefly with arguments and motives is apt to cultivate the casuistical habit. 9. We should shun ambition, the seeking of power, the clerical caste, or class-spirit of power, against which Christ so solemnly warned his disciples, and of which the Jesuit Society is an example, not only from its triumphs, but its signal failures. The world moves: but how much has it moved since Arnold of Brescia was put to death for maintaining the truth that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world!

How would you treat, homiletically, the parable of the unjust steward? (Luke xvi. 1–14.)

I offer but a suggestion or two, rather than present an elaborate plan. This parable certainly has inherent difficulties. The nut is hard, but the fruit rich. A sermon upon a parable will depend on the theory you

adopt, whether you assume it to be the teaching of a single spiritual truth, to which the rest of the narrative is added in order to make the story complete; or, that every part and each word of the parable are full of spiritual and moral lessons.

This parable of the unjust steward, I think, is not designed minutely to teach many lessons of moral conduct, but only one great lesson. This is the lesson of beneficence as a prudential measure. The explanation of the parable shows this, and it is best treated exegetically, or by way of exposition. When thus all carefully gathered up, the end of the parable will be seen irresistibly to be its prudential significance.

The act recorded in the parable was an act of sheer injustice on the part of the "steward," and he belonged to "the children of this world," as well as did his "lord," who, nevertheless, by contrast (morally), as in other parables, — for example, the unjust judge and the thief at midnight, — represents God, perhaps Christ. The "steward," by the same figure, represents Christian disciples.

The morals of the parable are to be contrasted, for greater effect, with the character of those for whose benefit it was intended. The prudence of the parable is the only thing in it we are to imitate. The "unrighteous mammon" is not necessarily property acquired by fraud, or used as the instrument of wickedness; but it is that which has always been the object of gain by worldly men; and "to provide friends out of the unrighteous mammon" does not therefore mean to make friendship with wicked men or their ways; but, by the

use of the unrighteous mammon, true friends are secured, so that "when it (mammon) fails, they (these friends) may receive you into everlasting habitations." The Christian is told to employ his worldly possessions in acts of benevolence among the worthy poor, who will receive him to eternal habitations.

The parable would seem to teach men (above all Christian disciples) the right use of money in a covetous world, and the profound relations that material things bear to spiritual character and happiness. Base things become heavenly in their uses.

A light is cast upon the true joys of blessed spirits, namely, the awakening of sympathy in the hearts of the good, and the bliss of being loved by those capable of loving purely. It touches the electric chain of sympathy that runs through the universe. It makes the rich man feel that it is for his everlasting good to help other men; that then he makes the best bargain. He secures habitations that need not be left, because love is the only thing that is eternal and divine.

What about preaching old sermons?

The best use one can make of most of his old sermons is to throw them into the waste-paper basket. Sermonic literature is dry and will burn, — it will at least for once kindle a fire. A minister who has reached or passed middle life will have hundreds upon hundreds of sermons that are fit only to be burned. A preacher of the last century in Connecticut left, when he died, seven thousand neatly written manuscript sermons; a more famous New York preacher, it is said, left eight thou-

sand; a small volume of six or seven sermons was published to be devoured by his faithful admirers, and the rest — by mice. This may be making light of the subject, but there is really great danger of a minister's creating a kind of sinking-fund of old sermons as professional capital to draw upon, — a sure premium to professional indolence. One should cut himself off from such a source of income, and become poor again. Then he will go to higher sources for supplies. Then he will go to work and produce something new, something better. A ministry of old sermons is a downhill ministry. A sermon is not a scientific treatise which is as valuable to-morrow as it is to-day. A sermon is a word, — divine love expressing itself in a word with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. How long is this word in speaking? When it has gone forth it returns again to whence it came. It has delivered the message, — a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. The word is given to a preacher to be used, and in the using it subserves its end. It speaks, perhaps, but once with power, and that were blessing and reward enough for any preacher. Not only the subject, but the object, the occasion, the audience, the moral sympathies of speakers and hearers, the circumstances of hearts, the hungering need of souls requiring to be fed with the daily bread which perishes the longer it is kept, — this cannot be altogether reproduced, cannot be precisely repeated as a human necessity to be met by a divine gift. The man for whom the sermon was made may be drowned before it is preached again, and all his struggles and yearnings after God and a new life drowned with him. The com-

munity, thrilled by some common affliction or agitated by some great anxiety, may be totally apathetic when the discourse is brought forth once more to awake a ghostly echo of past emotions. The sermon is the word in season, the fitting word, the living word which is inspired in the preacher who waits upon the intuitions of a sagacious and prayerful mind informed by the spirit of truth. The beautiful principle of adaptation has a deeper moral than rhetorical import, and is one of the most important in the business of preaching the Gospel; and it is the earnest and conscientious study of this principle — the study of the Word in its application to real wants in the living circle of one's hearers and people, in the mystic sphere of life and of the divine in its vital human relations — that takes preaching out of the conventional type and stamps it with fresh popular power.

Yet it is true also that viewing preaching chiefly in the light of instruction in the truth, there may be in it that which sometimes is worth preserving. A clear and well-arranged discourse upon some fundamental doctrine or duty, wherein both original thought and the most careful study have been employed, is a valuable result in itself. It may in some form or other be used again. There is such a thing as a thought which has life in it. This is infinitely exemplified in the thoughts of Him who said: "My words, they are spirit and they are life." In a lower sense this is true of such a preacher as Archbishop Leighton, whose sermons contain thoughts which are germs of spiritual life, and are therefore not to be carelessly thrown away and wasted, but which may

be productive of good and of the nourishment of souls in the faith. Nor is this confined to Leighton. Such thoughts form the nucleus of future thinking and development upon the same theme. I would therefore by no means counsel preachers to destroy all these genuine fruits of mental labour, but let them still be very careful how they use such intellectual products again in the way of sermons, for intellectual elaboration is not spiritual evolution and life. The Spirit must revivify and use such sermons if they are to constitute true preaching.

The correspondent who asks the question that heads these remarks, himself points out a sensible method of employing old sermons, and I will quote what he says:

"I suppose the sermons we prepare in the first years of our ministry have more care bestowed upon them, as we are usually very anxious then, so that the time devoted to sermon-writing is really not thrown away. These sermons therefore have not done all their service. My course now, after twenty-three years, is to take those old sermons, once so carefully prepared, read them over attentively, see what line of thought was followed, adopt the original sketch, add the accumulated reading of the years that have elapsed, throw the manuscript entirely aside and go to the pulpit with practically a fresh sermon, and being now unwritten (not *extempore*) it has a better effect than a written sermon. This I do at least once a month, and it gives me more time to prepare actually new sermons."

If one followed this advice, no harm, but only good would come from the preaching of old sermons. I would add here that in my own use of the term "extempore" I always mean speaking without notes, unwritten, but not unpremeditated or carelessly composed ser-

mons; they may and should be, on the contrary, fruits of the severest study and thinking. In true *extempore* preaching the words only are left to the moment and not perhaps even all of these; but freedom of mind is secured by reliance on thought, on one's self, on the deeply meditated theme possessing, warming, and inspiring the preacher, and, above all, on God's instant help of His believing messenger, and not upon a cold and dead manuscript.

Therefore I would venture to suggest: 1. Never depend upon old sermons for your ministry, — this is fatal. 2. Never preach an old sermon where you can preach a new one, even on the same subject and the same text. 3. If you preach an old sermon always rewrite it, recast it in a fresh form, using the thought that is good in it rather than using its special form of presenting the truth. It is said of an eminent preacher of Boston, that by the marks on one of his sermons he had preached it ninety-eight times, but it is also known of him that he rewrote his sermons frequently, and there was a spirit in his preaching which kept it and him alive in spite of his old sermons. 4. Having remoulded the material of an old sermon into a new form, like a potter, thrust it once more into the furnace-fires of divine love, of ardent prayer, and spiritual desire for the highest good of men and the pure glory of God.

Are not topical sermons to be considered the best method of preaching?

I beg to refer my correspondent from Iowa who favours strongly the topical method, to my work called

"Homiletics," and to the chapter under the general head of the "classification of sermons" (p. 444 *et seq.*) for a discussion of topical sermons in a more thorough manner than can here be done, hoping that the egotism of this may, under the circumstances, be excused.

The topical method has advantages and cannot be entirely laid aside, but it also has decided disadvantages and perils. It emphasizes the method. It demands a treatment more or less rationalistic (I do not say rational), thus tending to a less practical and spiritual type of preaching. It runs into essay writing. It almost irresistibly results in a stereotyped style, with military divisions and a rigid plan. A sermon ought to have points, but not always five or three. The topical sermon is abstract not concrete. It is, in one sense, human rather than divine; for he who accustoms himself to preach from topics, as did the schoolmen, instead of directly from texts, becomes less and less biblical in his tone and spirit. He disconnects himself more and more from the true idea of preaching as the delivering of a message from God, reinforced, it is true, by human reason and argument, but not dependent upon it as its chief means of persuasion. I cannot but think that this was the case with the celebrated Dr. Emmons, that master-artificer of topical discourses. He who finds his inspiration as well as theme in a word of God, in a text instead of a topic, comes, on the other hand, nearer to the living Word. It is better to find, for example, even so essential a doctrine as Regeneration in some one passage of Holy Writ which presents this great theme in

a special way as a soul's experience, or a teaching of Christ, or a revelation of the Spirit, — deep, unexpected, exhaustless, and eternal, — than to find it in our limited text-book or note-book of theology. By devout study of particular texts one may discover fresh views even in such a truth, springing from its psychologic relations and scriptural analogies. For a young minister I should say decidedly, let him begin with preaching from texts, — studying them carefully in their original and with the practical understanding as well as analytic intellect, with the heart as well as the head, placing them alongside human life, — and he will have a more spiritually inspired and truly successful ministry of the Word. Biblical exegesis should lie at the bottom of every sermon. The sermons of F. W. Robertson were thoroughly exegetical, and sprang from texts, drew their life from texts, while they possessed a partially topical method. They went to the roots of things because they followed the divine leadings of thought.

Will you give an example of the treatment of an historical sermon?

Briefly, the conversion of St. Paul is a noble theme for an historical sermon. It is narrated three times in the Acts, first by the historian, and then in two addresses by the apostle, in Jerusalem and before Agrippa. The apostle also alludes to the spiritual communications made to him at his conversion, — the vision and voice of the Lord, — in 1 Cor. xv. 8.

There is scope for profound analysis of the man in

whom three civilizations met, and who was the instrument shaped by divine will to preach the gospel to the nations.

The cultivation of the "historic imagination," as it has been called, is a great quality in the preacher, and is particularly required in a passage like this.

The time, place, and circumstances of the apostle's conversion — its historic and moral *milieu* — admit of the highest dramatic delineation, and call for the most accurate and extensive learning. Even its physical circumstances were picturesque. I vividly recall the broad dusty plain where the event of St. Paul's conversion must have taken place, in drawing near the ancient city of Damascus; and, above all, the fiercely dazzling brilliance of the sun at noon. The Bible story needed but the supernatural element to make it true then and there.

The inner elements of conversion are to be distinguished from the outer. There is an error in thinking that all conversions are similar or of the *ictic* kind. It should be shown in what the apostle's was peculiar, and in what it was identical with every true conversion.

I. The conversion of St. Paul subjectively considered: (*a*) The ruling purpose of life is changed. There is the same energetic man as before losing none of his natural traits, but his aim of life is transformed from a selfish (even if unconsciously so) to a holy one. (*b*) His religious beliefs are changed from the line of the Jew to that of the Christian, especially in what relates to the kingdom of God. (*c*) New Christly elements

of character are introduced to renew the man spiritually, — faith, humility, love.

II. Objectively considered: (*a*) Seen in what Paul himself immediately achieved. (*b*) Seen in the greater development of Christian truth and diffusion of the gospel throughout the world in all ages down to us. These results should be treated historically and broadly in regard to Christian life and ethics.

Application: We, too, are to have the new Pauline spirit in what he was, and did, and above all in the greatness of his faith, whose principle was love, and whose expression was trust in the gospel as the wisdom and power of God to save all men, if indeed we wish, like him, to conquer and save the world.

Will you speak about the Sabbath evening service? Should a preacher of ordinary ability attempt two sermons a week? If not, what should be the character of the evening service? What is the practice of our distinguished preachers in this respect?

I cannot answer these questions with categorical positiveness. It must be said that two sermons on Sunday is not an ancient custom. It is comparatively a modern innovation. In the times of primitive Christianity when there was the synagogue form of worship, and even when the assembly was held in the Roman Catacombs in days of persecution, we do not, from any account left us, obtain the idea that there was more than one preaching service on Sunday.

It is true the Apostle Paul at Troas preached so long that "he continued his speech until midnight," but the circumstances were peculiar, and he had that to say which he could not say again to the same audience. In the Patristic ages, we gather from the ancient Dominical calendar that there was one great service on the Sabbath (which was a festival day), held in the morning, in which the sermon came after the reading of the Gospel, and was strictly a part of the regular public worship. On occasions of particular devotion, however, we read that there was evening preaching as well as morning. In several of Chrysostom's discourses he alluded to their being preached in the afternoon. Augustine makes it clear that he preached now and then in the afternoon. Some of the discourses of Basil the Great were preached in the evening, — but all these were evidently exceptional occasions. In the Middle Ages, preaching was infrequent and was mostly done by the bishop; it was in fact usually connected with the elaborate cathedral service on Sabbath morning. It is true that short addresses not called sermons were made at various hours and during week days. In the Reformation, the times of preaching were more irregular. There is no rule which binds modern preachers in this respect. It must be left to the wisdom of individual churches and preachers. The fashion, now becoming almost obsolete, of morning and afternoon preaching services, had assuredly great advantages. It enabled the preacher to give unity of instruction and impression to the lessons of the day. What he omitted in the morning he could say in the afternoon; he could follow up the morning's sermon by a more practical dis-

course upon the same or a similar topic, thus giving one lesson, dealing one blow. Then the evening was left open either for a church prayer-meeting, which was an admirable institution to deepen the religious impressions of the day and to ascertain the interest awakened by the preaching, or it was unoccupied by any public service and there was opportunity for quiet home and family devotion. But times are changing and the Puritan methods are fast giving way, and the question is how to save what was really good in them and to bring in what is better still.

As to the custom of evening preaching I can only answer for the city where I live, and would say that our "distinguished preachers" find it useful to preach morning and evening. This is also the custom in New York City in the larger churches of all denominations; and if there were not good reasons for this it would probably not be followed. This is the practice now in many New England country towns as far as my observation goes. The evening service draws to it a somewhat different audience from the morning, and attracts young men and persons who otherwise would pass the evening idly or in social gatherings and places not morally improving.

It can be well enough seen that in some very isolated and sparsely settled communities but one preaching service would be practicable. In other villages where there are more people but the distances great, morning and afternoon preaching services, with brief interval between, would be convenient. In the larger manufacturing towns a morning and evening service would be more profitable. Ministers must judge for themselves. It is not by our

much speaking that we are heard by the Lord, or even by the people. Often the impression of one good sermon is obliterated by a second, or a third on the same day. It would undoubtedly be a great relief to clergymen to be able to concentrate their strength on one sermon; but if this plan were pursued, they are also to think whether an opportunity might not be lost for saying something to benefit other classes in the community, or for reaching other objects. The rule under certain reasonable conditions and limitations is, of course, to strive for the greatest good to be effected, and this the minister with the help of his church must decide in every given case; and that is why ministers are appointed to be leaders in spiritual things.

Will you give an instance of a biographical sermon and its uses?

Its uses are greater than are commonly supposed, and it is to be regretted that this kind of sermon has somewhat gone out of vogue. If God is in history, He is first of all in the history of every man. Biography is a fragment of humanity, and as a stone broken from a mountain it tells us the elements of which the whole mass is composed. In so far as biography teaches, it teaches by example; and a religion which has its very life in a Person who is our human example, cannot afford to neglect the vital suggestion and instruction which biography affords. This is a concrete argument that pulses with real life-blood. It penetrates from the outward man, the show of being, to the inward and formative elements of character, to what one really is and loves. It is interest-

ing to see that biographical preaching is esteemed useful by laymen, — and for such doubtless the Gospels and the Book of Acts were made full as much as for theologians. On the general subject a thoughtful English writer says:

"Protestants have put aside the ancient Roman calendar, but they have not repudiated the principle of it. They hold the admiration offered to have been excessive in degree or superstitious in kind, and the objects of it to have been, in many instances, ill chosen. But the principle of setting up objects of imitation is admitted by them as much as by Catholics. The lives of Moses, David, Ezra, St. Paul, furnish the material of a large proportion of Protestant sermons. Nor does any school theoretically maintain that such objects of imitation are to be found only in the Bible. No preacher is blamed for referring in the pulpit to modern examples of virtue; but it is supposed to be advisable, in the main, to keep within the limits of Scriptural history."

Why should we not discourse upon the lives of unscriptural saints, canonized or uncanonized, if God dwelt in them to will and to do of His good pleasure as truly as He did in lives given us in Holy Writ? Did they not equally manifest the divine love that dwelt in them? Why should not preachers hold up to view such lives (fruits of the Spirit whose gifts are endlessly varied) as those of Chrysostom, St. Francis of Assisi, Raimund Lull, John Huss, Martin Luther, Palissy the Potter, Admiral de Coligny, Fénelon, John Henry Wichern, founder of the *Rauhes Haus*, John Wesley and Edward Irving, the Scotch McCheyne, the sweet poets Herbert and Keble, the theologians and teachers Schleiermacher, Thomas Arnold, Frederick Denison Maurice, the English business philanthropists Thos. Brassey and George

Moore, the missionary Livingstone, the temperance reformer Mathew, the martyrs Patteson and Damien, and hundreds of less conspicuous names but perhaps as heroic lives, elect ladies and noble mothers, soldiers, artisans, slaves even, who have exemplified the Christian virtues in an evil world? Such persons through their strength and weakness have exhibited the same anointing spirit of Christ that fell upon the heads of disciples on the day of Pentecost. To use their lives for lessons would only be obeying the principle of the words of St. Paul: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." The only difficulty in the way of taking up the lives of modern saints is pithily expressed in one of Robertson's sermons: "Faultless men and pattern children, — you may admire them, but you admire coldly. Praise them as you will, no one is bêtter for their example. No one blames them, and no one loves them: they kindle no enthusiasm; they create no likeness of themselves; they never reproduce themselves in other lives, — the true prerogative of all original lives." True words. But biographies and biographical sermons are growing more conscientiously close to fact, more ruggedly realistic; and thus they can be made use of without so much fear of pious frauds. Still the counsel is good that it is "advisable in the main to keep within the limits of Scriptural history." Following this, I will take a Scriptural character, one from the Old Testament, and not even a saint.

It is well in preaching a biographical sermon to take for a text not the whole narrative, but, if possible, some

salient passage, which gathers up the spirit, drift, and lesson of the life in one sentence, — and such lives are evidently given us in the divine history as illustrating some particular lesson or principle.

Numbers xxiii. 10, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

The character of Balaam is a deep one, — one of amazing power, of mixed good and evil with a strife of elemental forces in his soul. He takes us out of the ecclesiastical circle of things into the natural, and we may study in him the original revelation of God in Nature and in the human mind.

One should not write a sermon merely to develop a subject, but to attain an object, and it is not enough to develop Balaam's character, but he should be made to teach us and to benefit our characters. The past should be turned into the present. The text contains the key of Balaam's character. The desire to die the death of the righteous is founded upon great intelligence, deep penetration into the ruling forces of the moral world, even if unaccompanied by the moral force to be righteous. What is a righteous man? What is the essence of righteousness? How is this righteousness connected, surely, with good, — or a happy life, death, and future? These are questions to be answered. Balaam saw their profound significance.

What it is that "makes for righteousness" is pretty much like asking what is goodness, and what is a good man. Some religions, some erroneous views of the Christian religion even, may find difficulty in settling these questions satisfactorily. The mere rationalist cannot answer them.

We might attempt an answer by saying that he who lays his life willingly under the divine law of right revealed in his own reason and conscience, is the righteous man, for this implies an entire surrender to God's holy will and renewing spirit. Since God's fuller revelation has been made in his Son, true righteousness is found in Christ, though Balaam himself might have found it, and might have found Christ in his day.

It would be necessary that there should be a philosophical and yet Christian discussion of the principle of "righteousness," and then of the connection of righteousness and good.

From the life of Balaam, so intensely human, so full of great lights and shadows, taken in connection with the text, — the profound cry of agonizing despair pushed from a great soul, — deep spiritual instruction may be drawn.

1. The highest knowledge of divine things (as in this preternaturally intelligent mind) does not insure salvation; one who knows what it is may fail of its light, peace, and final reward.

2. In all men this law of righteousness is found, as well as the consciousness, that if followed, it will lead to good. This is true of heathens. Take, for instance, such a man as Keshub Chunder Sen, who from the depths of Brahminism rose probably into the Christian life, and left behind him when dead a spirit, a seed which will not die; and Balaam, above all, who probably failed in following the light which his keen intelligence perceived.

3. All opposition to the Church or Kingdom of God must fail, because the Church is founded on that law of

righteousness or right, which is the law of being and the very essence of God. This opposition or curse may, however, be changed into a blessing, as shown in the biblical account of Balaam.

4. Death and its connection with righteousness, or what it opens to the righteous. Hengstenberg thought that Balaam had been led to renounce idolatry by hearing of the wonders and miracles which had attended the course of the Israelites through the desert, and supposed that as a reward for his change of religion he would be gifted with insight into futurity and greater power over Nature. Balaam was already, in one sense, a prophet, a seer of the one God; therefore some think he was a relic of the patriarchal age at a time when the knowledge of God was not restricted to the Semitic race.

The conflict of moral forces, the original divine revelation in the human mind, the historic circumstances, the mysterious interplay of the natural and supernatural so difficult to interpret aright, the common ground of human responsibility in all characters of men whether ancient or modern, the tremendous lesson of divine gifts misused, — the lesson to prophet and people alike, — make the life of Balaam a most fruitful topic for a biographical sermon.

Will you give an example of a topical sermon and its plan?

As this is the ordinary form of published pulpit discourses, an example might readily be found (not to speak of the older preachers) in modern literature, and nowhere better than in the unsurpassed sermons of F.

W. Robertson, or J. B. Mozley, or of our own Bushnell. In artless simplicity of construction and finished ease of style, J. H. Newman, as shown in his "Parochial and Plain Sermons," is superior to all. But I will take what seems to be a fit text, and treat it with some elaborate fulness of plan while talking familiarly of the process, although another might adopt quite a different method of homiletical treatment of the same passage, and another, one differing from both, such is the endless richness of the Word. Of course, whatever looks like learning whether Greek or German in the plan, would not appear in the sermon whose style should be suited to plain men.

Heb. xii. 14, last clause of verse. — "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

A scholar of the sixteenth century wished his dying hours could be lengthened out in order that he might devote them to the study of St. Paul's epistle to the Hebrews. Whether the epistle to the Hebrews was written by that apostle or not, it is an apostolic book, full of the faith which works by love and purifies the soul, though much hid in Old Testament shadow and symbol.

This text contains a perfect thesis, or theme, which is also given in a compact form, and for this reason I have chosen it.

The explanation of the text is almost always the basis of the sermon. We should come first at the real contents of the text, and then only can we draw from it the real subject. Sometimes the explanation suggests the sermon and makes the sermon; at all events there should be definition before proposition. The definition should

not be dry but of a living sort, and I would try to bring out by the treatment of this text the point that every text, which is a fragment of divine truth, needs some explanation to clear it from its human surroundings of time, place, and circumstance, and to reveal its absolute meaning, — a primary law in sermon-making; and this text from the Hebrews contains, as has been said, a distinct theme, which can therefore fitly form the foundation of a discourse.

A topical sermon is a true discourse, in the rhetorical sense, combining analysis and synthesis, and arranged according to the rules of art with a view of producing an impression on human minds; or, in other words, it is a sacred oration addressed chiefly to the reason, and through the reason to the conscience and heart. It is Demosthenes in the pulpit instead of upon the bema. It concerns itself about a particular proposition, and has as distinct a subject as well as object as the "Oration on the Crown." Although I do not think it is the way in which the earliest preachers preached the gospel, the topical sermon came early into the Church with Greek rhetoric and philosophy, and has done, doubtless, a good work, and will continue to do so in the hands of a certain class of preachers, though there is "a more excellent way," and one more profoundly vitalized with spiritual power, life, and love, but none the less the way of reason and intellect, and which will be more and more appreciated as time goes on, and men are better taught by the Spirit of Truth, which is also the Spirit of Christ.

A definite portion of God's Word is thus placed before the preacher in a text to be dealt with, and this he is to

interpret to men's intelligence so that the receptive reason, or logos in them, shall recognize the divine reason, or logos, in the text; for no man receives or believes what he did not believe, or at least was not made to believe before. The kingdom of God in the Word of God is only the expression or revelation of the kingdom of God in man.

Now there is a great and beautiful truth of the kingdom of God in this text; and what can I do (the preacher says) to make it clear to my hearers so that they shall come into its interior life, so that they shall receive with faith and joy this divine lesson to their souls? The question is, how shall I treat this text not so much for my own instruction as for the instruction and building up of the people in the most holy faith? What is the divine fact involved in the text which is to be evolved in the discourse, and which it is eternal life for men to know and obey?

Three things seem necessary to be explained, viz: "Holiness," — "to see the Lord," — "the Lord." Even in regard to the explanation, while there is no rigid rule for its place and time, it would seem natural that at the beginning of the discourse the principal terms of the text should be explained, and above all the main thought of the whole — "Holiness."

"Holiness" has here the same general sense as "purity" — the quality belonging to "the pure in heart" who shall see God. It means that moral blamelessness of purpose and life which springs from a pure heart, since holiness as well as sin proceeds from its seat in the heart; it comes through the inward purification of the whole

spiritual being. "Holiness" (τὸν ἁγιασμὸν) has in this place the sense of something devoted to a holy object, something sacred, as set apart to God like a Hebrew altar, and is so used in the sixth chapter of Romans, 2 Thess. ii. 13, 1 Peter i. 2, and in many other places in the New Testament; or, in other words, it conveys the idea of sanctification and purification of the nature, and not technically and in a theological sense imputed righteousness or holiness. It means a new principle of obedience, an inward separation from the world and its corruption, a sincere turning of the heart amid its temptations and imperfections to the holy will of the Father, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts," and thus signifies a germ of the heavenly nature, of the kingdom of God implanted in us, — implanted in the very constitution of our spiritual nature, though covered up and choked by sin, — by the Spirit of God.

How may this "holiness" be more particularly defined?

1. The predominance of the spiritual over the sensual in man. The spiritual, not the fleshy mind, the mind in which the "spirit of holiness" dwells, rules amid the wayward influences which beset a human being, like a ship steered by a firm hand, through storm and shine, in one main course.

2. The real purification of the heart by the Holy Spirit — the whole inward man pervaded by a cleansing divine influence that reaches the controlling springs of moral character, bringing the thoughts of the heart into subjection to Christ.

3. The aim — in reliance on the love and spirit of Christ — after perfection itself, the perfection of the

"sons of God" who are "perfect as He is perfect." The first clause of the text in which is the active subject or impulse of the whole, speaks of this as a "pursuit," as a holy aim combined with the following after "peace," which is alone found purely in God, as in Augustine's words: "The heart, O God, was made for Thee, and always will be restless until it returns to Thee."

"To see the Lord," signifies the true spiritual apprehension of God in His Son, who is the manifestation of the Father. It is the clear beholding of God's character and nature, or the seeing Him "as He is," which presupposes the ability to do so, and a spiritual fitness in the beholder for this (Rev. xxii. 4; Matt. v. 8). Meyer, whose words generally go to the root of a text, certainly so far as an unerring scholarly intuition can carry him, says: — "*Das Schauen versinnlicht den Begriff innigster Vereinigung, und das Ganze ist eine Bezeichnung der messianischen Seligkeit im vollendeten Gottesreich,*" — which words I venture to quote.

John xviii. 6, is not opposed to this view, because the passage refers to seeing God with our bodily eyes or senses, while God is truly approached and revealed to the inner spiritual eye by faith (Rom. v. 1, 2).

"The Lord." The article here determines nothing, since it signifies in other passages sometimes the Father, and sometimes the Son (Matt. xxiv. 20); but it is evidently, in this place, God in Christ, God manifested fully in the personal being and kingdom of the Son (Heb. ix. 28.)

Having in the simple explanation of the text thus brought to view something of the moral and spiritual

fitness needed for the true revelation of God to the mind, we are better prepared for a proposition which shall embody all this as the *topic* of a sermon drawn from the text. The subject then might be: —

Purity of heart the essential condition of apprehending God and divine things.

The main reason or proofs are these: —

I. One must be wrought into the same disposition or spirit in order to know the spiritual and holy God. He must be raised to the same plane of moral temper, comprehension, and being. Like comprehends like. The faculty of knowing does not stand alone, but depends also upon a man's inclination and spirit of mind. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." The intellect by itself does not apprehend spiritual being, but this knowledge comes through the appreciation of the purified trust and moral affections. Even as a man's æsthetic capacity must be opened to enjoy Nature, and his reason to enjoy scientific knowledge, so the spiritual being must be opened to perceive the spiritual God and divine things. "He that loveth is born of God and knoweth God."

II. The disturbing element of sensual passions must be removed, for the pure reason and affections to gain their ascendancy, and to act clearly in the field of moral and spiritual truth.

III. Purity of motive in obeying the will of God converts the object and subject of obedience into one, so that the believing man grows more and more Christ-like, and "a partaker of the divine nature." What is divine in him is liberated from its temporary bondage of evil,

beholds the eternal redemption that Christ has wrought for it, and acts, thinks, and sees freely and holily as a child of God.

This truth which I have attempted to prove may meet objections like these: (1) It conflicts with essential Christianity, or the work of Christ. But that it does not do so is seen from the fact that Christ died in order to make us pure and holy. This was the end and aim of His perfect sacrifice, — to redeem us from all sin, that we might be holy and unblamable in the sight of God. (2) It conflicts with the fact of sin in holy men. But that it does not do so is seen, because "holiness" in the text does not mean perfect holiness of act and life, like that of a purely spiritual being, but the principle of devotion to good, of holiness or purity in the heart, of the life of God in our humanity as its divinely ruling principle.

How rich the inferences and teachings to be gathered from such a truth as this!

1. The end of all our living is to obtain the glorious vision of God.

2. We can never see God should we grow angelic in intellect did we not love and obey Him in all purity of heart.

3. The beginning of holiness in this life shall be perfected in the life to come. This is the heavenly state begun now. Heaven or eternal life is the power and creation of the immanent God whether here or hereafter. Many a man — as we perhaps have seen — belongs more to heaven even now than to earth, and there is a light on him which never was on sea or land.

What keeps any of us from seeing the glory of God here is but the mist of earth and sense, as the apostle John says: "That was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man coming into the world."

4. The longings after holiness experienced by good men — not weak and sentimental, but such as rise in the heart of a strong man mingled with pain and great conflicts of spirit — are really satisfied in God.

5. "The pure in heart" shall be able truly to know God, to hold intercourse with Him as dear children, to come nigh unto Him and enjoy Him, to do His holy will perfectly, and to love and "see God" now and forever.

What course would you recommend a preacher to pursue to rid himself of a habit of halting often for words when speaking?

The question implies that the correspondent who asks it holds to the good old custom of extempore preaching, — by far the best method when it is what it ought to be, terse, thoughtful, sympathetic, and forcible. Luther said that "he who can speak is a man;" he did not say this of him who reads. But to be an extempore preacher one must possess a mastery of all his powers of body, mind, and spirit, for it is a supreme effort of manhood. The answer a mathematical instructor with whom I am acquainted and who himself is never at a loss for a word would make to the question, and that right off, would be: "Let him be put through a hard course of mathematics;" and would he be far out of the way? Since speaking is, first, a mental act, and a

man must have something to say before he says it, discipline in logical thinking is at the root of clear and ready speaking. Confusion of thought makes confusion of speech. When a thought lies lucid in the mind, having freed itself from all ambiguous and doubtful conditions, there will be no difficulty in finding words to express it. A vigorous ratiocinative process within clears for itself without a course of utterance that like a torrent brought to a head sweeps away every lingering obstacle, hesitation, and difficulty in expression. So we often give the advice, Let the mind be filled with the subject and the words will take care of themselves, — in nine cases out of ten they will do so, for in nine cases out of ten the difficulty is psychical instead of physical, and even in the exceptional one it may be a physical obstacle that can be overcome by an effort of will. Will-power ought to be as much educated by a speaker as reasoning power. I knew a theological student who not only possessed no natural gift or mental quickness for improvised speaking, but who had also a decided stammering in his delivery that constituted a serious physical obstacle to his becoming a preacher at all, — but awakened to the value of extempore speaking as increasing his power in the pulpit, by a tremendous effort of pure will and patient toil, having made a vow never to preach with notes, he so trained himself that the difficulty was overcome, and although he stammered and hesitated still in ordinary conversation, when he preached he spoke without hesitation and with uncommon power and freedom. He adopted also rather an argumentative style and trained himself to close thinking, not shunning

the most difficult and abstruse subjects. He thus exemplified Quintilian's conception of the orator, that it is the whole man who speaks, that it is one who brings in play all the forces of his nature, and that oratory, in fact, is the end to which the entire mental and moral development of the student is to be directed.

But facility of speech — a ready use of words — is a special gift. When it is not bestowed by nature, then it must be acquired by great pains, and it may be easily thwarted by slight physical causes. Forgetfulness of words in speaking may be occasioned by temporary bodily weakness, bad digestion, sleeplessness, ill-health, and any letting down of the tone of the bodily system. It may become an actual disease, affecting the memory like the trouble called aphasia. Power is lost by considerable and repeated hesitation for words; that sympathetic flow of thought and feeling is lost which influences more and more by accumulation the minds of hearers like a magnetic stream pouring upon them, and which when once broken is not easily restored. Therefore, to speak well one must be well and have all his vital energies in easy and healthful play, so that the minds of those who listen to him are conscious of a power that bears them along flowingly on its deep, strong, unbroken current.

It is said of the younger William Pitt, that he cultivated his facility in the use of words by a running translation of Latin or French, uttered aloud. Practice in a debating society is to be recommended to young speakers, if at the same time they can avoid the slovenliness of style, the redundant rhetoric, and the endless repetition of a stock debater. Some men's minds work slower than

others, and a debating club is apt to quicken the mind and rouse it, as the body is stimulated in a race or athletic game. Many of the most brilliant of the Parliamentary orators have been trained in the Union Club of Oxford; but English speakers nowadays do not strive to be eloquent, and in this they have made an advance; they strive, only with a little more care as to method and choice of words, to talk right on sensibly, manfully, — at times forcibly, — and without confusion either in thought or language. The best way to enrich one's vocabulary is by copious reading of the best English literature, both of prose and poetry; and those truly masterly fictions, like Thackeray's, of which we have examples in these days, in which subtlety of thought, penetrative analysis of character, and plastic harmonies of style, mingled with realistic vigor, are exhibited, should not be entirely shut out of a minister's reading and course of training for the earnest business of preaching. Even a careful study of synonyms is useful. The cultivation of conversation as a fine art is also helpful, and serves to take one out of the student habit of mind into a larger space and public area, as it were, where he must give up his subjective tendencies and endless ramifications of thought, and speak to common men of common things. But, after all, practice in speaking off-hand directly to the souls of men, women, and children at the prayer-meeting, in the Sunday-school, in the lecture-room for running exposition of the Scriptures, on the platform, and wherever a word may be said in season from a full mind working constantly upon these vital themes that relate to the Kingdom of God and the

salvation of men, forms the best preparation for ready, effective utterance in the pulpit.

What is meant by a textual sermon, and will you exemplify this?

Technically, a textual sermon is one that follows without deviation the terms of the text, clause by clause, word by word, and the text's form moulds the sermon's plan as closely as a model does a cast; but I would prefer to widen this definition, and employ textual in the sense of finding the actual material, the real thought, inspiration, and life of the sermon in the text. This enables the preacher faithfully to interpret the Word of God, and to carry out the invaluable truth that preaching is indeed interpretation. It is the art of interpreting God to men just as an astronomer interprets the secret of the stars, or the artist the meaning of Nature, that we may know and love Nature. It enables the preacher to deal with texts either in the mass or fragmentarily; to use texts that compose longer or shorter portions of Scripture, — perhaps a chapter at a time. And this is the beauty of this method, that the texts may be longer and embrace wider range, like the parables; or extended figures, as in the 15th chapter of Luke, 1 Cor. ix. 24–27, Eph. vi. 14–17; or narrative texts; or texts containing some important subject fully treated, as 1 Cor. xiii. and Mark x. 33–50, where humility is the underlying lesson of the whole; or meditative texts, as many of the Psalms, where the inner life is brought forth. The textual sermon honours the Word by keeping close to it and dwelling upon it. It develops the riches of the text, mines

into it and follows out its details as the miner follows the lode of a gold mine, — not, perhaps, running into a formal proposition and argument, but at the same time not disregarding the ground-truth of the passage (*das inneres factum*), the essential unity of thought, the comprehensive generalization. Its subject may sometimes be defined by a general title, such as "The Centurion's Faith," "The Healing of the Blind Man," "The Golden Rule," "The New Commandment." Thus, the teaching is drawn from the heart of the Scriptures in an original and independent way, and its spiritual power educed, with nothing to intervene between the living Word and living hearts. Let us now take one of these subjects, "The Centurion's Faith," as an example. The whole narrative really forms the text; but the more specific passage in which the centurion's faith is comprehended is in Matt. viii. 10: "When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

We find the parallel passage in Luke vii. 1–10. Here Jesus shows his beneficent divine personality in humanity; and it is a scene in a life-drama in which the pagan soldier, the Jews claiming to be Abraham's children and of the true faith, and the kingdom of Rome and the Kingdom of God pass before us. Should such an animated portion of the Scriptures be treated in an abstract way? It is life, the life of the Son of God on earth, rolled out in vivid colors as no fresco or canvas could present. There is an opportunity to discuss the vital elements of faith, and the argument is from the less to

the greater, — if I, a subordinate who know how to obey, am obeyed, how much more the Lord of all should be trusted and obeyed? And then the conclusion that the slave was healed in the same hour in which Jesus spoke the word through his divine power, or the idea that the personal presence of Christ was not needed for effecting the cure desired, and that the Redeemer could heal the servant with a word (εἰπὲ λόγῳ), — not "speak the word," but "command by word" merely, — this shows a faith above that of the senses. It betokens a spiritual susceptibility which the Jews, with all their advantages, had not shown. It is a privilege indeed to be born in a Christian land and house, — we Christians, as it were, now take the place of ancient Israel; but many who are born in a Christian land are put to shame by ancient Romans and modern heathens. Such spiritual members indeed of the "true Israel" are scattered everywhere. Evidently the centurion represents the Gentile element of the world, and the Jews the "children of the kingdom;" and yet it is said, "I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved." Thus we obtain the correct idea of a spiritual kingdom on earth, even as one has said that "the external participation in the visibly and also outwardly realized kingdom of God necessarily presupposes an internal foundation of it in the spirit," and the centurion's faith is an example and earnest of this faith by which the Gentiles should surpass Israel.

The preacher would have to show in the sermon, by a close textual study of the whole narrative outward and inward, in what respects the centurion's faith was supe-

rior to the faith of the Jews, so that Jesus marvelled thereat.

I. In its spirituality. It gave evidence of spiritual susceptibility which the Jews with all their knowledge did not have.

1. Its spirituality proved by its humility. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." The centurion, in the spirit of faith, said: "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof;" and in a spirit of thoughtful humility he did not come to Christ, but sent the elders.

2. Its spirituality proved by its love. The earnest desire for the servant's welfare and the benevolent spirit toward the Jews in building them a synagogue show this.

3. Its spirituality proved by its implicit trust in Christ's divine nature, mission, and power. "Command by a word," — no personal presence, no sensible medium desired. Here was an entire readiness to accept Christ in his highest claims as Redeemer and Lord, which was not seen in the Jews.

II. In its effectiveness. The reality of the centurion's faith was shown by its power, — by its actually obtaining the object it sought, namely, the life of the servant. "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." In all these respects the genuineness and superiority of the centurion's faith was demonstrated.

I will give two plans of the treatment of the same text by eminent preachers, the first being that of F. W. Robertson; but how meagre this mere framework unclothed of the flesh, life, and spirit that pulses and glows in the completed sermon!

In his introduction, he says that Christ's admiration

did not fasten on the centurion's benevolence or perseverance, or anything but his faith. The New Testament gives special dignity to faith. By faith we are justified; mountains of difficulty are removed by faith; faith appropriates heaven.

Faith, as a theological term, is rarely used in every-day matters, and hence its meaning is obscured; but faith is no strange new power, but the same principle we live on daily. We trust our senses; we trust men: battles are fought on the information of a spy; merchants trust their captains.

Such, too, is religious faith. We trust in probabilities. We cannot prove God's existence. Faith decides the question of probability. Faith ventures on God's side, upon the guarantee of something that makes the thing seem right.

I. The faith which was commended.

II. The cause of the commendation.

I. Faith commended. (1) Evidence of its existence in the hardness of unbelief having been taken from the centurion's mind; and added to this is his kindness, "building a synagogue," "caring for our nation." (2) Evidence in his humility. "Lord, I am not worthy," etc. This was either the result of his faith or one with it, since the spirit of proud independence does not consist with faith. Worldly ideas are, indeed, quite different; for young men now are taught to be independent. True religion frees us from independence on wrong things, powers, and lusts, but makes us dependent on right things, persons, and God. (3) Evidence in his belief in an invisible living will. "Speak

the word only." He did not rely merely upon his senses; he asked not for Christ's presence, but only for an exercise of his will. He did not ask Christ to operate, like a physician, through the laws of nature, but looked to him as the Lord of life. He felt that the Cause of causes is a person. He learned this through his own profession. The argument ran thus: If the command of will wins the obedience of my servants, then by thy will the obedience of the spirits of sickness and health is secured. He looked on the universe with a soldier's eye. To him the world was a camp of organized forces in which authority was paramount. Law was to him the expression of a personal will. The soldier through law read a personal will; and so each profession teaches some religious truth.

II. The causes of the astonishment. (1) The centurion was a Gentile; therefore unlikely to know revealed truth. (2) He was a soldier; therefore exposed to recklessness, idleness, and sensuality.

The Saviour's comment is on the advantage of disadvantages. "Many shall come from the East," etc. Some turn their disadvantages to good account. The principal remark with which Robertson closes is that this narrative testifies to the perfect humanity of Christ. He "marvelled" with genuine wonder. He had not expected to find such faith. The Saviour increased in wisdom at he grew in stature. In all matters of eternal truth his knowledge was absolute; but in matters of earthly wisdom, Robertson thinks, his knowledge was modified like ours by experience. If we disbelieve this, we lose the humanity of Christ, and we lose the Saviour.

His was a perfect human life. "If we do not love him as a brother, we cannot realize him as a Saviour."

The second plan from the German of Dr. C. Palmer is briefly this: —

For theme, What is the faith which gave such satisfaction to the Lord and which he did not find in Israel? (1) It is a faith which springs from humility ("Lord, I am not worthy"). The man, according to Luke's testimony, had done much good to the Jews, yet he holds himself lowly in the presence of Christ. Faith can alone be where Christ is all in all.

(2) It is a faith in which love is joined. Other rulers think that something is lost from their dignity if they condescend to give a friendly word or look to their inferiors; but he sent a special request to the Redeemer solely on account of his servant. Some parents, even, are so hard that any sacrifice for a child is too much for them; but he exercises this careful painstaking for a servant. Without such love faith could not exist.

(3) It is a faith which strives for the highest gift and endeavours to appropriate it. It would have been a great thing if the Lord had himself gone to the bedside of the sick servant, and so had healed him; but the centurion asks a much greater thing of the Lord, because he judges that as he himself executed his will through others simply by a word, without putting his own hand to the work, so much more this power, and this power in the highest degree, of executing by a word, belonged to the Lord. It is thus a quality of true faith that it desires not only the little gift, but that it stretches out the hands for the full and perfect gift.

How would you treat a lecture? What are the essential characteristics of a lecture?

A lecture is more exclusively an instructive discussion of any subject of religious knowledge, than a sermon. A sermon should never, therefore, be a lecture, nor a lecture a sermon. It is from confusing this distinction that sermons have acquired their reputation for dulness. The ground idea of a lecture is instruction. It is teaching, or imparting knowledge. It runs on a smooth level of plain talk respecting things more or less important in the religious life, — truths, facts, duties that require some explanation and clearing up, and that give an opportunity for suggestions upon many matters of considerable interest, but not perhaps of the profoundest or most vital nature. While a sermon should always contain this noble element of instruction, it should have, and aim for, a great deal more than this. From the fact that some preachers are only lecturers conveying truth in dry, intellectual and scientific form without earnestness, without the pressing sense of an office involving eternal responsibility, — involving the personal character and spirit of the preacher and his everlasting love and union with Christ the Word, — it is for this reason that topical preaching, which more nearly resembles lecturing than any other style of sermon, is not the highest order of preaching, and is not necessarily spiritual, biblical, or even moral. It may be, and often is all these, but it is essentially theme-preaching rather than faith-preaching, and it draws its power from a human subject rather than from the living Word.

But the lecture has its place. The good custom of week-day lectures consisting of running expositions upon

the Scriptures — like Chalmers' lectures on Romans — has served a useful purpose in the churches. Carried to an extreme, the lecture has sometimes fallen into a wearisome track, and the interminable courses of serial lectures upon the Apocalypse, or the Minor Prophets, or the Assembly's catechism, or the Book of Common Prayer, or Church Polity, or the Reformation, or the Jewish church, or the characters of the Bible, or the canon of Scripture, or even the Divine Attributes, — some of them begun and not ended, — have become, after a time, a kind of funeral march, diminishing to the vanishing point of death. Lectures are to teach, but in a free way; and in view of the fact that in an age like this where there are so many books and such multiplied sources of instruction even upon religious themes, nothing can hold the popular mind long, and its craving for what is new while it should be chastened cannot be repressed. The condition of things must have been vastly different when Chrysostom lectured in running commentary upon the whole Bible, or when in earlier New England times preachers carried triumphantly to the end complete courses of lectures upon Systematic Theology.

The lecture, therefore, whether on a week-day evening, or Sunday afternoon and evening, should be varied, should be brief, should not be too scholastic, while it may and should give the results of thorough scholarship,— bringing forth things new and old, — should not promise too much nor lay out too big a plan, while at the same time it may pursue a thoughtful and comprehensive plan and stick to it, at least so long as healthy enthusiasm can be sustained. Where there are indications of weariness,

and people do not attend for trivial reasons, it does not require great sagacity in the preacher to alter his method and to substitute another and fresher subject; or, better still, preach a sermon addressed to conscience and heart, or hold a purely devotional service, where prayer is changed to lecture and the Great Teacher takes the place of the human one.

Many preachers have found that lectures upon the harmony of the Gospels, or the life of Christ pure and simple, especially in the winter season, when the attention can be concentrated, are far the most fruitful of all in building up the people in the spiritual life, and oftentimes in pouring in upon souls oppressed and darkened by earthly cares a divine light of loftier hope and peace and love, as the flock of old followed the Good Shepherd whithersoever he led them, while listening to his voice and feeding from his hand. In this connection, the subject of expository preaching might claim a word, whether it be in the pulpit on Sunday or in the week-day lecture. Exposition is mainly exegesis, but not of a purely philologic kind; the lecture or sermon derived from it should be a vigorous generalization that gathers into it all the essence and juices of the text, its relations to kindred truths, the whole course of its argument, the practical lessons it teaches, summarizing it and catching and imparting its original spirit, so that it utters its voice with a present living power. If hard work is not put into expository preaching, it is the very poorest of all. It runs to the weakest and thinnest dilution. The difficulty to be guarded against is going over the ground too minutely and slowly. An apostolic epis-

tle, for example, was a letter addressed to a church and was read as one letter, — it should not take a year to go through it. Let condensation be studied. The Epistle to the Romans has been the Sebastopol of young ministers fresh from seminary teaching; but though filled with weighty thoughts and profound with spiritual life, it is a fiery and continuous argument hastening *ad eventum* like a Philippic of Demosthenes, even if interrupted with episodes of emotion and flights of inspiration. If analyzed too microscopically and pottered over, the general sweep and current of the argument is lost. Exposition, therefore, should be made interesting as well as instructive and not a mere class-teaching, for the preacher is more than a lecturer. He nourishes the life of his flock, arouses and cultivates their devotional affections, promotes their benevolent activity, represses their selfishness of living, and leads them into the strength and joy of a higher life in Christ. And I am led to say in closing, that there is one New England church service of the "Preparatory Lecture" that has happily survived, and may be still employed by the minister with great and good effect. While it is an occasion for clearly instructing the people in regard to the origin, history, and nature of the rite of the Lord's Supper, it is especially adapted to awaken and deepen the spiritual life of the Church by drawing it nearer to the head-spring, — the personal love and loyalty to the Saviour. The spirit of love which is the central impelling power of Christian duty, is stirred in a lively manner, and the heart is brought into a condition of immediate preparation to meet the Lord, taking it out of the earthly and bringing it into the heavenly

state. This service is neither a technical sermon nor a technical lecture, but rather a close and familiar talking with and about Christ, even as the disciples met him at the institution of the Supper, as recorded in the last chapters of John's Gospel, and after his resurrection, when he suddenly appeared among them at the breaking of the bread.

I constantly meet with men who say, "Preach the gospel, pure and simple; preach salvation, nothing more nor less" — ministers, I mean; they preach repentance and salvation in midsummer as well as midwinter. One never hears anything else than just this, "Believe and be saved." Are they right? Should the bulk of our preaching be on the Atonement?

If preaching is essential for the spread of the gospel and for the salvation of men, then the doctrines of repentance and faith cannot be too earnestly or constantly preached. The question is not now, are these truths preached too much, but are they preached enough? Instead of being the theme of the pulpit "in midsummer as well as midwinter," where, indeed, do cultivated audiences in our large cities have their sins set in array against them as did those who flocked out of the cities to listen to John the Baptist, and hear a sermon "pure and simple" on repentance? Yet repentance is the initial act of the religious life. It is set forth in the New Testament as the entrance act, the essential condition of the acceptance in the heart of Christian faith.

It implies a true and profound sense of sin and of its fatal power, from which the gospel was sent to deliver us. It rings on every page of the new evangel of life and hope in Jesus Christ; and the parable of the Prodigal Son, spoken by our Lord, has its depth and pathos in the truth that sin is repented of and forsaken because of the fatherly love of God. The first preachers of the gospel cried: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance;" "Repent and be baptized, every one in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;" "Him hath God exalted for to give repentance to Israel;" "God also to the Gentiles hath granted repentance to life;" "Having commanded all men everywhere to repent;" "And testifying to the Greeks repentance towards God;" "If God, peradventure, will grant them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." I call to mind my surprise when taking up to read the bulky volumes of Systematic Theology, published some years since by one of the most eminent teachers of theology in America, and what seemed a most learned and authoritative work, and not finding in the index, and hardly in the whole of these volumes, the word "repentance," much less any account or discussion of this fundamental truth of our holy religion. But, whatever else we learn or learn to do, we must become as little children before entering the kingdom of heaven. The will, the basis of self hood and character in man, must be actually moved toward God and the good. Does not a sinful heart now need true repentance and real forsaking of its sins for the realization of eternal life promised

by Christ in the gospel, as much as it did when Christ personally offered men the forgiveness of God through trusting to his word and work for them? Where is unrepented and unforsaken sin spoken of in the New Testament as being carried into that pure kingdom which faith opens to true believers? Is not repentance the first step to the "righteousness by faith," which is the crown of glory of that new kingdom won by Christ's atoning sacrifice? Is not repentance truly a necessary part or effect of faith itself, and which is awakened in the sinful heart by the stirrings of confidence in One who is able to take away the sin it deeply feels and deplores? The answer of Christ to the young man who came to him, asking how he might obtain eternal life, shows the deep-reaching quality of this principle, and that the possession of all things else could not make up for an absolute forsaking of sin and self, so that there might be a sincere consecration to the Saviour. Can there, then, be too much or too earnest preaching of the vital duty of repentance, especially in a period of the world when sin has grown indurated, when the selfishness and atheism of the human soul are confirmed by long custom and resistance to the truth; when the covetousness and impurity of Christian lands is tenfold more inexcusable than the same vices in those pagan lands to which Christianity first came; when a refined materialism, cold and unassailable, respectable in external show and life, and no longer repulsively animalistic, has taken the place of a more open opposition to Christian faith? In fact, a return to the plainest preaching of repentance and faith for salvation as in Christ's time, and in the spirit of apostolic preaching, arousing in deadened hearts a lively

sense of sin and of the need of God to help them, would be the greatest boon and the greatest reform that could visit the modern pulpit. We should hear a sound of the moving of new spiritual life. Such a generic truth as repentance, which is a first fact in religious life, cannot ever grow old or unprofitable so long as there is any sin in the human heart to be sorrowed over and forsaken by him who would set his face toward God, following the voice and laying hold of the aid stretched out in the gospel of Christ's salvation.

Yet repentance and faith are not all. They are the first things, — the germinal conditions of spiritual existence; but we are told to add to our faith knowledge, virtue, temperance, holiness, godliness, brotherly love, charity, and all glorious and divine qualities of a fully-developed Christlike life. Christ being formed in us the hope of glory, from him are to be unfolded the beauties and forces that are wrapped up in his infinite nature and perfection, so that we "shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." As regards theology in its relation to preaching, to which the question we are treating has reference, I have no hesitation in saying that there needs to be some readjustment of ideas, looking both back and forward, both to original sources of power and to future development of the fuller riches of the Word of God, — the blessed gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. What is called the "New Theology" (although Maurice, its chief promoter, if not originator, would not have acknowledged the name as if indicating something novel and phenomenal), if it has done no other good, has assuredly widened the

scope of modern preaching by finding God in all things; by finding his gracious gospel of love not only in the Bible but in Nature and the human soul; by searching the Scriptures with a freer and more reasonable spirit, not imposing dogma upon the Scriptures, but drawing the truth or dogma from them; by liberating truth from merely prescriptive authority and bringing it nearer to the simple Christian consciousness of the ages. If the "gospel" be indeed Christ in all his relations to humanity, then to "preach the gospel" opens to us a view of what preaching is, so comprehensive that no minister, whoever he be, nor any other man in all his life of active thought and effort in doing good, can even survey its extent, and, much less, compass its requirements. Preaching in this aspect becomes an idea or duty which embraces a far broader field than is conceived of by those who hold a theology based upon a scheme of human logic, which, though admitting into it truth enough to save, cramps the living truth, and does not allow it space to develop naturally, as if the human could contain and set limitations to the divine! There is also a moral wrong done. Christ, by His spirit, cannot lead on a mind into higher truth that will not learn anything more from the Scriptures or Nature or any other source than it has already learned or thinks it has. Does it yet know the great doctrine of the Atonement? Has it learned its truth by learning and subscribing to the words of its theological formula, adjusted, perhaps, mainly to a thoroughly objective plan of divine government? Does it know its profounder depths of spiritual knowledge and love? Has it exhausted its moral reaches

of redeeming power, as applied not only to the individual soul but to society and the race? When we speak of the bulk of our preaching being upon the Atonement, do we know what this infinite truth of the incarnation and sacrifice of Christ, the second Adam, comprehends in the spiritual renovation of humanity, going deeper in its life-giving influences than did the death-giving sin of the first Adam? The Word became flesh. God made a revelation of Himself in the person and work of Christ, and this manifestation of the nature of God in a human person, exhibiting all the possible perfections of human character and showing what the divine is in human nature, setting before us a moral ideal of divine love in human life, work, self-sacrifice, word, thought, temptation, joy and sorrow, citizenship and sonship, — this offers an inexhaustible field of preaching. Opportunity is given of "unlimited spiritual progress" on this line of the deeper and deeper study of Christ, of the "Godhead disclosed in perfect manhood," of the manifestations of divine love in a human person, of the union of Christ with and his dwelling in every soul, and of the workings of the Holy Spirit, sent forth by Christ into men to give them new life and to redeem them into the moral image of God.

God has also revealed Himself in Nature and the human reason. By a better class of thinkers, the natural universe is not only the creation but the manifestation of God, or expression of His mind, even as a human work of art is an expression of the author's mind and character, — nay more, is full of the inhabitation of the Divine Spirit; and it is therefore to be especially studied

by him who would teach men divine things. There has been in the realm of the Spirit's higher manifestation, or the Church, certainly a better movement in theology in these later times, dating back perhaps to the time of Schleiermacher; which, with many human errors, vagaries, and audacities, has undeniably enlarged thought, has brought theology more into harmony with reason, and, above all, has recognized in Nature and man more of the divine, so that all things God has made teach God and are essentially religious, and, instead of expelling God from His own universe has joyfully and adoringly seen Him in all things, above all, in man. Man is a child of God. Man is to be regarded above all in this aspect. Man's sin even clinging to him so close that it becomes, as it were, his second nature, does not, after all, belong to him, is alien from him, is not his true nature. The root of that is divine. There is that in man which is above Nature, and which cannot be referred to the working of natural laws, but which is supernatural and lays hold of God. The humanity which is truly perfect, as in our Lord Jesus Christ, who was the Ideal Man, is divine.

This moral perfection of humanity in Christ is one of the most inspiring themes for the preacher, of any in the New Testament. The broad field of Christian ethics, which represents the application of the principle of Christian love, or the spirit of Christ, to human conduct, and which is, therefore, as wide and varied as are the circumstances of human life and human society, and which, comparatively speaking, is a fresh field of instruction from the pulpit, is opened to the preacher of truth

and righteousness, so that "only believe," when brought to the test of actual Christian duty, becomes a phrase of the deepest import, and means the application of Christian faith to the real life, walk, and conversation of the believer, who is upheld by a higher power, and serves a purer love. The preacher, then, in his study of humanity, may constantly find and interpret the divine. He may be a prophet of God to the human soul. He may discover a deeper spiritual philosophy in the history of man than he has been accustomed to do. He may discover more and more of God. The truly intelligent preacher, though he may detect in them imperfections, false opinions, deplorable errors, will at the same time cherish no contempt for human philosophy, science, art, or literature, but will win from their thoughtful and loving study deeper conceptions of the powers of the human soul, broader views of life and duty, richer thoughts for pulpit instruction, truer views of Christ as the perfect man, and humbler views of himself and his people, as imperfect and sinful men, needing repentance and thorough cleansing through Christ's spiritual work and sacrifice; and he need never complain of the limited scope of the preacher's vocation, which not only interprets "the mind of Christ" in relation to God and the eternal things of his kingdom of faith and love, but in relation to man and his human life, as manifesting the indwelling power and workings of the Spirit of God. Christianity is not an abstract truth, and does not give us specific rules of human conduct that may be learned like the precepts of a book, and exhausted; but it is a life developed from the continual application of the central principle of love;

and therefore it requires the constant study of a prayerful and thoughtful spirit which lives upon God and His Word, and draws new light and truth from eternal sources.

The true scope of preaching is a subject by itself. It would require a lengthy discussion to follow out only a few points belonging to the legitimate aim of preaching, such as instruction in truth, persuasion that leads to conversion and a Christian life, edification in holy character and the imitation of Christ, consolation under the sufferings and woes of life; but I have thus far only attempted to show that in the simplest preaching of the gospel of repentance and faith for salvation, there is an exhaustless scope in the spiritual application of these practical Christian truths; and when we add to this, the vast fields of the divine manifestation in creation, in the universe and the human mind, where the preacher, as the interpreter of God, is permitted to draw from all these founts of divine knowledge, he should surely not be at a loss for material, or be confined to the iteration of human propositions out of which the life may have fled. Christ is the life, and from him spring streams of living waters that shall never dry up, and that shall never fail to satisfy the wants of the human soul and give it eternal life. He only may complain of the narrow scope of preaching and of the preacher's calling who has sounded the depths of but one simple and familiar text: "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

What is the best style for the pulpit?

Cicero's words, "*Stilus optimus et præstantissimus dicendi effector ac magister*" still hold good, and he who makes constant use of writing tends thereby to increase his speaking capacity, and undergoes a mental training which is a most excellent modeller and teacher of oratory. This, to be sure, is to be taken with conditions, as, for instance, that speaking is speaking and not writing; that a speech comes from a more interior part of a man than a formal essay; that speech is more personal than simple writing, and is aimed more directly to move the mind and sway the will by thoughts taken out of their abstract relations and wrought into forms calculated to produce moral sympathy and conviction. A preacher's duty is not put into his pen and paper. It ends in hearts, not in sermons. It is written in living characters. As another modification, it is necessary also for a preacher not to confine himself entirely to writing, not to be a slave to his writing-desk, but to mingle speaking with writing, to cultivate his power of oratory and of addressing souls without the hindering process of written sermons. Conditions such as these being fulfilled, writing may be said to be of the utmost value to a preacher, and to be almost essential for the forming of a clear, forcible style. He who writes out his thoughts is obliged to pay some attention to his style; and he who never writes out his sermons, if he do not specially guard against this tendency, will be in danger of losing his power of accurate speaking.

Style, however, is something that cannot entirely be learned. John Bunyan and General Grant never learned

it by the study of rhetoric or the classics. It is a subtle quality belonging to the man, and depends upon his whole personality, character and spirit, — upon the thousand inner and occult facts of being which make him different from other beings. It is the man's spiritual flavour. Some cannot help having a vulgar style, for the vulgarity is in them. Styles vary as temper and character vary. Some styles are bloodless like a starved soul. Some are dry as of a nature desiccated of all the juices of sensibility and sympathy. For a man to enrich his style he must enrich himself. To give it nobility he must become ennobled. He must deepen the sources of his intelligence, he must elevate his tastes, he must enlarge and transform his moral affections. Thunder does not come out of a reed. A man must be strong to have a strong style. He must reinforce the weak sides of his nature and chasten the passionate and brutal. What is dark in him must become luminous, and what is low be raised to the height both of his argument and his aim. Thus, there are subjective sources of style which are difficult to describe, and are inherent in the nature as resultant of a man's inherited traits, moral sympathies, bent of character, culture, and breeding. Bismarck's style of speaking is said to be as curiously involved and confused at times as that of Oliver Cromwell, yet it embodies in this complexity of form a potential character that evolves amid its cloudy folds the electric thunderbolt. These native or constitutional traits of style may be considerably modified and regulated by rhetorical training, but cannot be wholly done away, nor should they be where they are good.

There are also certain negative excellences of style, which lie mostly on the outside, and that belong necessarily to all good writing, like grammatical correctness, accuracy in the use of words, propriety, method, good taste, condensation, that must be learned as any art is learned, and that belong to the very science of language, in which one may be perfecting himself all his life. And, perhaps, the best rule here is to write much, if one only write carefully. Great writers, as a general rule, have come to their effective style by immense toil, by innumerable defeats and disappointments, by endless corrections and polishings, by study of good models without servile copying, by trying the edge of their minds on hard subjects, by analyzing men, by observing the subtle laws of mind in persuasion, by indomitable trial, conflict, and suffering; and then, there is something more inimitable still in themselves, some inborn force and genial power that is their own and superior to all these things and all external aids, which enables them to win a style that they no longer trouble themselves about any more than about the pitch of their voice, or their looks, or their gait, but which becomes the facile instrument of their thought, the strongest or most exquisite.

As to the best style, whether in the pulpit or out of it, while there are minor elements not to be overlooked, there are three qualities of a good style which are of the utmost importance, namely, plainness, individuality, and unconsciousness.

The first of these — plainness — is essential to every good style. That which can be understood and rests on fact is a fundamental quality. Simple fact stated in simplest words,

with no effort to enhance it, lies at the base of force in style. This is body. This is reality. This makes the powerful charm of the style of the period of Swift, coarse as it was sometimes and which was the expression of the spirit of that age, and which has been imitated successfully by Thackeray. This is plain, idiomatic English or Anglo-Saxon. Here we stand on solid English soil of the manliest and richest language ever known, the language of the English Bible, and which, though widely composite as hardly any other language ever was, and some of its elements are like the despised drift-wood of the wild sea on which its piratical authors sailed, is nevertheless one and homogeneous, and is as capable of the most energetic and straightforward treatment of practical subjects, as of giving expression to the loftiest spiritual contemplations of the soul, and the most delicate and tender shadings of the imagination and emotions. It is the language both of action and feeling. But, as in Latin, for example, in Cæsar's Commentaries, its chief strength is its plain significance. It is business-like and wastes no time on unimportant things. It says what it wishes to say, and that is all. Though of a more artistic sort, the Greek idea of "form," which was at the bottom of all the powerful art of Greece, its architecture and sculpture, illustrates this plain, factual simplicity of style, where everything tells for what it is, where all is reduced to pure reality, where there is nothing in excess. It would be a good thing for the American pulpit if it could rid itself of redundancy and fine writing, of all that is unessential, and come down to matter of fact, at the same time not descending to absolute lowness of style. There is, I

think, already an advance in this direction. Preachers write better now than they did fifty, or even twenty-five, years ago. They write with more force and clearness. There is a less ambitious style. Young preachers are not so artificial, but more manly and direct. They do not feel that it is necessary to be eloquent every time they preach, but are satisfied to say simply what is in their minds and hearts. The manner is far less stilted, learned, and poetic. Not that poetry should be banished from the pulpit, not that the imagination should be repressed, but that it should be rather the poetry of truth and feeling than of words; that what one says on the sublimest themes should be said in the plainest way, and that the thought should have its full force without being hampered by words; that the words should fit the thought exactly, even as the body the spirit. Let young preachers fight it out on this line all summer, till the stoutest stronghold surrenders.

Another great secret of style is individuality, — that the style should be one's own, and not another's. The magnetic power of style lies in its genuineness, in which the author lets us see himself, takes us into his soul's experience without artifice or deceit, and what he says comes from his inmost self and not from a conventional habit of thinking. His ideal is in himself. He lets us have his honest thought. His style interprets his mind and not some one's mind whose philosophy or theology he has espoused. Young writers and preachers often begin by adopting the style of a favourite author or preacher, and it needs reflex action of the mind to bring it back once more to a natural style. Through art one

comes to nature. One must become aware of his not being himself, and then by a strong effort of will he must come to the use of a style in which he is himself and not another. Therefore, he should try to write and speak just as he would talk when roused to do his best, and he will thus acquire a genuine manly style, and will find that ten honest words out of his own head and heart are more effective than ten times as many words of the greatest preacher or writer of the world. Let us be content to quote Emerson fairly now and then, but let us not attempt to write like him. In preaching, especially, sincerity and conviction carry the day. It is wonderful what influence a man has who only speaks what he believes, whose utterances, however homely and simple, are the convictions of his heart. If you give the best you have to the people, that is all they can ask or will desire. Launch forth into the deep! was the command of Christ to his disciples, and the mighty power and the miracle that accompanied the act of obedience to the divine voice, tell us that simply to speak Christ's word and obey him as his ministers, is better than human learning, skill, or eloquence.

The last element is unconsciousness. There cannot be much that is great which is consciously so. What we tell others that we ourselves think is great they will laugh at. The greatest speech I, for one, ever heard, was made by a plain man in war-time, who did not know that he was speaking eloquently, but totally forgot himself, gave himself to his cause, and his country and freedom spoke through him. St. Paul forgot himself while preaching Christ. He was an instrument of divine love. So was

Chrysostom, so was Savonarola, so was Whitefield, so was Robertson, thoughtful and subjective as was his manner of preaching. The subject was blended in the object. To love God is the only way to know Him and to teach Him. Love destroys self, and creates that unconsciousness out of which all that is noble is evolved. Love is the play-movement of the mind in which everything really great is done. The greatest preachers, amid their distress, their self-martyrdom, and often-times agony of spirit, have still preached with joy and freedom. It has been their supreme delight to lose themselves, and to let Christ speak through them his words of everlasting life and power.

1. *Will you give the best method of preparing sermons, especially with reference to the use of books, commentaries, sermons, etc., upon the theme in hand? How much and how should they be used?*
2. *How much may one use another's thought without plagiarism, and without dwarfing himself?*
3. *What course of study would you recommend to a young minister, in order to develop and enlarge his mind? Is general reading in a special line best suited for this purpose?*

These questions embody an important subject, — the intellectual life of the minister. To a man of noble aspiration the intellectual side of the ministry offers great

attractions. As it deals in mind, it must almost always be that, in Shakespeare's words,

> "nature is subdued
> To what it works in, like the dyer's hand."

The shrewd temptation of intellectual men, however, is to turn the ministry wholly into a matter of mind, to make a sermon the development of an idea only, — an argument or a doctrine ending entirely in the reason, — to resolve all into logic, and to lose that moral earnestness, that spiritual purpose, which rises higher than the intellect, and strives for men's salvation in their actual restoration to God's love and obedience. To preach in order to evolve a thought merely, however clearly and brilliantly, to establish a proposition, to make our statement good, to save ourselves, so to speak, is not the prime work of a sermon; but only when we save others, when we lodge the truth in them, when we bring our hearers out from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, does the sermon become a sermon and show its power. The intellectual aim in preaching, high as it is, — and no one can hold a higher conception of it than I do, — has got to be modified. It is not the highest measure of power in the pulpit. I listened, not long since, to a finely-written and thoughtful discourse, preached by a minister of reputation, who was, nevertheless, a stranger to me; but there was not a discernible purpose or current of remark in it which showed that it was addressed to another person! it was wholly introspective; it might have been delivered as a monologue, without a single hearer; it did not reach forth a tentacle

of desire to another mind or heart; the speaker himself stood like a post, without feeling or action; he apparently did not know or care that there was an audience before him; he had not even the inspiration of a pagan prophet on a tripod, but seemed as a dead man lifted up in the pulpit, and gifted with vocal power for half an hour, and then the voice ceased. Is this the way to preach the Gospel of love and life, let Plato even be the speaker? With his admirable clearness and fulness of thought, he should, somehow, have done something with his sermon for the good of men. If the desire were in him, it should show itself. To speak is in order to convince. There must be the love of men in the speaker, the resolve to save men by preaching. Preaching is the communication of life. Yet the intellectual element is essential. Let us have not less but more of it in our preaching, — I mean, let the whole mind be thoroughly aroused and filled with a higher purpose for this great work. The minister, above all, should not be a narrow man, since he is the interpreter to humanity of the divine in its fulness. But ministers, like others, may be narrow men, if they yield their minds to the complete bondage of human systems. While these systems, containing much that is true, are so rigidly formulated that they admit of no enlargement or modification, they retard intellectual growth, not allowing the following on and out where truth, and above all the Spirit of God may carry, and which, therefore, prevent good men, who shut themselves up in them, from being the best instructors or educators. If ministers do not cultivate the scientific mind, nor keep abreast of the age intellectually, but

submit implicitly to human authority, they must cease to be leaders in the discovery and development of truth. Indeed, it is almost a simple thing to say, that preachers should know more now than they once knew, because their audiences are better educated, and knowledge is more widely diffused. They should also necessarily be men of large intelligence, since the kingdom of truth is one, and all that partakes of the nature of truth springs from a common centre. The most insignificant physical fact has a relation to and a bearing upon the highest spiritual truth, and upon divine doctrine itself.

The intellectual culture of a minister and the studies he should follow are mapped out for him in the theological seminary, as the result of the combined wisdom of many minds, but there is also a self-education that must go on, as a constant mental nourishment, needful for the daily and yearly demands of his professional life. The wide-casting preacher, as well as pastor, must keep up his reading, to be a safe as well as stimulating guide in the broadening opportunities and growing knowledge of an advancing Christian age, where many new forces of intelligence other than the pulpit are at work. But, in the world of knowledge, a man's intellectual attainments should be proportioned to his wants. He cannot compass everything. He may spoil the whole by intellectual pursuits which are totally unproductive, and which lead him away from the main object. But it is difficult to draw the line. If, as Quintilian said, ages ago, the "orator should know all things," the preacher, who interprets the mind of God, should be surely a no less knowing man. As there is something sadly limiting and

degrading in ignorance, and as voluntary ignorance allies itself to evil, the ignorance of the "minister of light" is peculiarly dishonouring.

I am not one of the advanced who would do away with the study of theology. A knowledge of the philosophy and history of doctrine would seem to be fundamental. Christian doctrine is, also, in one sense, the staple of preaching, since preaching rests back upon it for its support, or for its real body and authoritative plant, without which it is unsubstantial and ineffective. If the man who sits in the pew need not be a theologian, the teacher who expounds to him divine truth should be familiar with its principles, as the teacher of any physical science should be grounded in the laws of that science. He should have painfully gone through them in their more hidden and inner relations of thought. It is not only the great facts, but the fundamental ideas, the philosophy of knowledge, that the preacher should be conversant with, if he is expected to have that depth and reach of appeal irresistible to the reason and moral nature. Every sermon, even the most practical, strikes its root in this philosophy of doctrine. The science of religion — not only the doctrine of God, but the doctrine of man in his relations to God — forms a minister's life-study. He is bound, as far as his opportunities allow, to pursue this study, and to read the best theological books, past and present. His sermons should show the influence of this reading in their general philosophic deepening of thought, rather than in their dialectic forms that the common mind tires of. He is assuredly a shallow teacher who does not enlarge his

field of the knowledge of those inner truths of consciousness that have regard to the manifestation of God in His Word, in the human soul, and in the moral and natural universe. He is not to think that this is a closed book, and its last word has been said. Theology is a progressive science. While he is a delinquent to his professional duty not to have informed himself to some real extent of what has been thought and taught in the past in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, the literature of the early Greek Church that came so near the spirit of the Gospel, the period of Augustine, the old mystic theology of Germany, the theology of the Church of Rome in the Middle Ages, and that of the Reformation which contended with it, the later developments and antagonisms of Christian doctrine in Europe, and with the writings of leading German and English theologians, he should, at the same time, not neglect the phases of the most modern thought, influenced, as it is, by the enlargement of scientific and philosophic knowledge; and, as there has been continual advancement in the past, so he should look for it in the future. The difficulty with some is that they have locked themselves up into a school. They have given over their minds' independence to the keeping of a human master. They do not study the word as a divine source of light, and thus exhaustless. This is all right if their conscience is satisfied, and if they take no further interest in the progress, even conflict, of thought. But their sermons will show this. The living thought of the day will not be in them. They may suppose that they hold fast what is good; but they do not prove all things, and have

settled down into the opinion that what is new is bad. The uses of the study of theology to the preacher are great, both in deepening his own thought and giving steadiness and force to his appeal to the mind of his hearers; but in the future, it is to be hoped, that the theology, in the sermon itself, will be of a less scholastic and dead sort, will translate thought into life, will tend directly to the establishing of God's law in men's souls, to the building of righteous character. Doctrinal preaching, it is often said, is going out of fashion. That kind of doctrinal preaching which is drawn from a theological system rather than from the Word of God, which is wholly dialectic and abstract, ought to go out of fashion. Just so soon as truth is crystallized into a theory, into a system, it loses its life. It may be good as a guide, or a fence; but it is no longer a living thing that affords nourishment to the soul. But the pure "teaching," or "doctrine," of Christ, however deeply dwelt upon by the reason, and made the subject of thought, is a very different thing.

If the preacher is also called upon to understand man, in order to apply the truth to his mind, he must know and must continue to inform himself about the human mind. We do not reach the mind accidentally or in a confused way. The laws of will, conscience, and feeling — those principles or faculties which belong to the constitution of mind, which are the innate and governing forces of rational being — should be studied in a comprehensive way, and with the aid of all lights of modern scientific thought. Cannot a simple preacher of the gospel do without them? Certainly; but it does

him no harm to know the laws of human activity, in bringing to bear upon the soul higher motives than those that move men in trade and the ordinary affairs of life. It is the same mind still, though approached for a different purpose. The preacher gains a decided vantage-ground from this knowledge of what mind is organically, and what are its moving powers. Who, for instance, that attempts to teach morality, can afford to know nothing at all of the ethical works of such writers as Rothe, Dorner, Martineau, and Maurice? They discuss the same problems, though under other forms, that Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, and every earnest preacher of Christ deals with constantly. One may not accept all the conclusions of these writers, he may not yield his mind entirely up to them, any more than to other human authorities; but may he not derive stimulus and suggestion from communion with them? The reading of many books (to come closer to my correspondent's question) does not "dwarf" the mind when it is done for a true purpose and in the right way. The resultant of right reading is thinking, is to excite independent thought; and this is the test of reading, that it awakens the mental energies to reason, compare, judge, investigate. It is not to furnish the mind with the ideas of others, but to arouse its powers of individual reflection, and to give it, at the same time, a wider field of material for thought. I am of the opinion that a general course of reading of the best authors upon such subjects as theology and ethics, is far better than reading at the time upon the special theme of a sermon. The preacher should do the special work himself. We may be, truly,

in danger of plagiarism, if we read other writers, other articles, other sermons, perhaps of very able men, upon the specific subject of the sermon. This getting up of a sermon by special reading is not the best way. It is the wrong sort of inspiration. If we do read the works of others, full time at least should elapse for the mind to recover its power of independent thinking, to cast off the spell of a mightier mind. It is better to go further and deeper than the immediate need, to fill the mind with principles, to master the philosophy of a subject, than to suffer our thinking upon the relations of truth to a particular theme to be done by others. Let us prepare our minds by general study for preaching; but let us make our own sermons.

The subject, for example, of ethics, is a grandly opening field occupying now the best thinkers, for the minister's study and reading; I am not sure that the study of theology itself is not to take a more ethical turn, — that is, to become imbued with more of the human, or the human-divine, element, — and to grow less purely metaphysical, than in the past. It belongs more to Christianity than even to philosophy. If ethics be the science of moral law, it is still the law of life. Christian ethics concern the living affections, motives, and functions of mind that go deepest in moulding character; and it is permeated with the idea of love, which is the motive-power of the gospel and the essence of Christ's sacrifice for humanity. And, at the present time, the very noteworthy expansion of this noble science so that it takes in the moral relations of men not only, severally, to God, but also, generally, to one an-

other in the social and political sphere, the laws of good conduct and citizenship, the better regulating of society by the application of the same principles of justice and love that govern the individual man, looking forward to the establishment of a righteous state on earth and the coming of the kingdom of God among men, — this gives a new import to ethical studies. The minister is most deeply interested in these questions, — in the principles of right to be observed among men, the defence of the oppressed and weak, the reformation of the criminal class, the elevation of the masses sunk in ignorance and vice, the wise treatment of the temperance question so as to check the evil more effectually, prison discipline, peace reform, the laws of trade and relations of capital and labour, the great subject of popular education, the cleansing of civil corruption in towns, cities, and the nation, the wide field of benevolence and almsgiving, — all the hard problems of political economy and sociology, which can never be solved without the aid of the Christian principle; taking in also the relations of the industrial and the fine arts, of science, or whatever really influences men for good or evil in their social and public relations.

This subject of reading, especially what and how to read in order to prepare the preacher to preach, so that he may be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," is, in its place, of exceeding interest, and deserves a fuller treatment than my time and space permit me to give it.

I have already spoken of the general reading in theology, philosophy, and ethics which is useful to a minister

for the maintaining of the intellectual life and the solidifying of his preaching, or, in Sydney Smith's terse language, "what is needful to have and shameful to want." It is quite easy to give advice that one does not himself find so easy to follow, and to recommend books that one does not himself read; and it is likewise absurd to expect that an ordinary hard-working pastor can carry out so extended a system of reading as a purely scientific or literary man is forced to do; for the minister is not primarily a learned man, since the very chief apostles were called unlearned and ignorant men (ἄνδρες ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται); although it was added "and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." They drew, indeed, from a fountain deeper than books, because Christ opened to their minds things divine, and revealed that knowledge of God which is more intimate and spiritual than lies on the surface, like intellectual or natural knowledge. But, for all this, it is nevertheless true, that unstudious ministers, as a general rule, survive their usefulness in the pulpit; and there is at least one field of study which may be said to be absolutely essential to the preacher, to the maker of real sermons, though even here there is room for exceptions, since divine truth is something to be interpreted by the prophet rather than translated by the scholar, namely, the study of the Scriptures in their original languages. One might say, that a minister should never dare to preach on a text that he has not carefully examined in the original; yet there is a quaint story told of John Bunyan, which is not without instruction to the arrogance of the mere scholar. One of this

class, from Cambridge University, encountered the unlicensed tinker and asked him how he, not having the original Scriptures, had the hardihood to preach. To this, Bunyan answered by asking the scholar if he himself had the originals, those written by the prophets and apostles. No, but he had what he knew to be true copies of the originals. "And I," said Bunyan, "believe the English Bible to be a true copy also;" upon which the university man went his way. And was not Bunyan, in the main, right in saying that the plain English Bible, before the new translations, revisions, and commentaries, good as they are, had been made, contained the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in all its spiritual fulness and saving power? But for the preacher to plant his feet on the original record, as on a rock, is to stand more firm. He should teach his people this truth, so that they shall not be offended when the meaning of a passage is discussed. The reality and usefulness of commentaries may be overstated, but the value of exegesis for purposes of instruction cannot be. Original and conscientious exegesis is becoming more and more the only foundation of preaching and theology, — the preparing of those living stones which the reason builds into the harmonious structure of divine science. It is for this cause that the preacher should be, for himself, a Hebrew and Greek scholar, so that he shall be able to carry forward all his life the exegetical study of the whole Scriptures. His commentaries, translations, revisions, dictionaries, grammars, chrestomathies are nothing more than helps to this broad study of the Word, by which the Scriptures may be co-ordinated and compared with

themselves, and the true "mind of the Spirit" evolved. Commentaries may be a slavery and a snare if a man be not himself an accurate scholar, able to judge, or, at least, to form an independent opinion, one not only drawn from the grammatical analysis of a passage, but from the survey of a book and of the complete Scriptures, in the spirit of the language employed and in the usage of words, terms, and ideas. This daily systematic study of the Scriptures in the original, carried through long periods, and the professional life, with all aids of learning possible, fits one to preach, better than the study of isolated passages for the sole purpose of making sermons. Topics for preaching will spring up fresh and abundant, — they will be like the suggestions of the Divine Spirit. This will make the full and spiritual preacher, who goes to draw from the everlasting fountain. The minister should have enthusiasm enough to pursue this systematic study by himself, setting apart certain hours for it, but he also may be urged on by association with his brethren in study together of entire books of the Old and New Testaments; and surely young ministers may thus, by mutual stimulation, acquire more Hebrew and Greek than they have done in the seminary or college, especially if one or more of their number is an able and earnest scholar. I think it to be the duty of a young pastor, at his settlement, to form, with others, such an association for a thorough study of the Scriptures, giving much time, and, I might say, prayerful thought to it, and letting nothing interfere with it. His own library will gradually show the influence of this strenuous and continuous study. His com-

mentaries, selected with intelligent care, will by and by extend themselves over the whole Bible, and instead of the dusty and old-fashioned Rosenmuller, or Bengel, he will have the best representatives both of the old and new learning; and, for one, I do not think that some of the older commentaries are to be neglected; for example, Bengel, Calvin's Commentaries, Luther on Psalms and Galatians, Leighton, Lightfoot, and before all, Chrysostom, who still remains a mine of theological learning and devout thought. But the minister now has an untold advantage in his access to such scholars as Ewald, De Wette, Meyer, Godet, and the best modern English commentators; and he has no excuse in remaining ignorant of the freshest Biblical researches that are brought to his door in English translations. If he can go to the German and French sources, so much the better; but he should go to these for critical, not homiletical, purposes. The homiletical portion of Lange's Commentary, no one, probably, conceives to be of much value. The preacher wants only light, not methods, in his professional work. He asks no one to do his thinking. Pulpit helps are pulpit hindrances. They enfeeble the preacher's invention. In preparing a sermon, let him first make his plan and write his sermon; and after that, if he please, he may read the sermon, the article, the review of another upon the same topic, and may then, perhaps, be able to correct an erroneous statement or strengthen a weak one; but his dictionary, grammar, and commentary, — his Winer and Buttman, — these are the best tools to help him quarry the original stone. The polish and decoration come when the material is

prepared and is already reared upon the constructive lines of architecture which he knows to be firm and true, because laid in faithful and solid scholarship. Thus strong and spiritual preachers are made. I would only add, that the revival of interest in Hebrew study among settled pastors, is one of the best signs of the times.

Of course a book might be written upon the intellectual life and culture of the minister in its varied directions, linguistic, scientific, and philosophic. The more a mind is enriched the richer will be its product. The better it is trained the sharper its penetration. A philosophic mind reaches the heart of a subject far more readily than a half-educated one, however bright in wit and rhetorical endowment. The success of F. W. Robertson as a preacher was due in a great measure to the philosophic discipline of his powers. Yet rhetorical culture must be added, as representing the external side of the mind, its expressive power. Rhetoric is not altogether an art or superficial study, — it allies itself with psychology and logic, and also with literature. Literature is a universal language, in which the mind expresses its thought, emotion, and inventive fancy in the most living form. It is the moral and intellectual life of humanity embodied in speech, and in its grand departments of historic and creative literature, the preacher may find the human soul, which he is appointed to guide and save, imaged forth more clearly than in any other way, from the book of Job to Shakspeare's dramas, and from Shakspeare to the last work of literary genius which sets forth in vital colour and expression the original ideas of the mind.

Literature, says Matthew Arnold, is the best that has been thought and said in the world, and in order to know ourselves and the world we must know the best that has been written and spoken. Literature, indeed, comprehends all knowledge worth knowing and recording, forming the image and expression of the human soul, not only in conduct but in beauty, not only regulating the moral sense, but feeding the emotions and desires. We often see scholarly ministers, but we do not always see ministers of literary cultivation. There is a difference here. There is vigour but not culture of mind, strength but not gentleness. Why not the two combined, as in the blessed One, of whom a quaint English poet, Thomas Dekker, wrote: —

> "The best of men
> That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer;
> A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,
> The first true gentleman that ever breathed."

In this connection it might be said that when Art shall assume its true place in education, — a place which it has not yet obtained in America, excepting in the department of the art of money-making, — then æsthetic culture, in its important relations to the interpretation and expression of Christian truth, in the world of the ideal in religion, will be recognized by preachers of "whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." There is real poetry in the Bible and in the religion of Christ; for it is "the eternal law, that first in beauty should be

first in might." Among books which should be found in a minister's library and diligently read, there might be less useful, enriching, and mentally-taxing books than Ruskin's "Modern Painters," Kugler's "Handbooks of Painting," and Fergusson's "History of Architecture." But the wide-open book of Nature is also spread out for the minister's study, in which the mind touches its native soil and is reinvigorated. The soul of Nature is divine. The beautiful and the good go together, and the moral impulse is profoundly allied with the natural when unperverted by sin. God should be regarded as immanent in Nature, which is the manifestation of Himself and His thought. When we once realize this truth then the world becomes a new thing to us. Then the study of Nature will be quickening to all the best that is in us. The contemplation of Nature in its æsthetic aspects, however, does not give us, as it seems to me, positive thoughts or ideas, so much as it refreshes and inspires the mind, renders it productive, and impels it to new achievement. It makes it over, as a dip into the ocean in summer heats makes over the body, and cures its lassitude and infirmities. It is like the lifting influence of good music. Frederick the Great was wont to listen to music when he was planning his most heroic campaigns. George Eliot said that she always wrote best after listening to the music of the great masters in Germany. Her mind was aroused and made creative.

I have thus desired to show that the minister in the range of his studies not only should read books of knowledge, but books of inspiration. His preaching will be indescribably improved; for who has not caught fire in

sermon-making at times from the poetry of the prophets? Dante, Shakspeare, and Tennyson may also, now and then, awaken in us a subtler thought, penetrating to the heart of things. Our confessions and creeds are themselves symbols. The mystery of divine truth can, in one sense, be only made known to us through the forms of language and expression. We see as through a glass darkly. Yet the preacher has a superiority to the ordinary speaker, in the intellectual posture of his audience and their moral and spiritual preparation for the reception of divine truth. Carlyle says: "What an advantage has the pulpit where you address men already arranged to hear you, and in a vehicle which long use has rendered easy; how infinitely harder when you have all to create, — not the ideas only and the sentiments, but the symbols and the moods of mind! Nevertheless, in all cases where man addresses man, on his spiritual interests especially, there is a *sacredness*, could we but evolve it, and think and speak in it. Consider better what it is thou meanest by a symbol; how far thou hast insight into the nature thereof."

I have been led away, by the interest of the theme of the intellectual culture of the ministry, from the immediate questions of my correspondent, and have only left myself room to say, that in the actual preparation of a sermon, as far as my judgment goes, the books one should read should be limited pretty much to the Scriptures themselves, and to those scholarly aids that enable us to come at the exact meaning and substance of the text. That is the primary and essential thing. In a word, the sermon should be drawn by our study and

thinking from the exhaustless soil of the Word rather than from the comparatively thin soil of a book, or an article in a theological review, or another sermon. To be sure, a preacher has a right to draw from all sources where he can get help and light upon his theme, but his study should be systematic and general instead of spasmodic and topical, and it should be, in making sermons, rather directed to the broader principles of truth, with his own thoughtful application of them to the subject in hand, than applied merely to themes for the exigencies of pulpit ministration from week to week.

What are the relations of a preacher to public opinion?

The preacher is supposed to be a man of sagacity, endued with a grain or two of common-sense. He looks over his own little sheepfold and sees around. He hears the voices without as well as within. He has some comprehension of the age he lives in, and knows he does not live in the times of Duns Scotus or Cotton Mather. He discerns the signs of the times as well as the redness of the morning sky. He studies the currents of popular sentiment, whence they rise and whither they trend. This is as essential as the study of books. Human acts, even of a combined and public nature, do not occur by chance, since they are the acts of those gifted with intelligent will, so that no public opinion that has ruled communities has been without moral character. Public opinion springs from the action of mind upon mind, brought together in families, societies, states, and epochs, and all public opinion can thus be traced by a divine,

if not human, eye to its source in moral choice. The glow of a public opinion that lights and hangs over a whole land is but the reflection of the hidden fires of thousands of minds; for no one mind, or ten, or hundreds of minds make public opinion, though public opinion is sometimes originated in the soul of a strong man inspired by good or evil. Public opinion can sometimes be traced home to its beginnings. For instance, the opinion which has spread so widely the principles of social libertinism in the state and the popular life, may be assigned with considerable accuracy to the poet-philosopher who lived by the lake of Geneva, — a man of original genius. Should not the preacher know something of the life and thought of so brilliant a mind as Rousseau, valueless as his philosophical opinions are? Thus, also, the religious fire of the Methodist movement, which passed over nearly two continents, sprang from the mind of a young Oxford student, humble enough to employ any method that promised good; as the greatest revival movement of this century was originated in the self-devoted spirit of an unambitious Sabbath-school teacher, of Chicago.

The public opinion which overthrew slavery could, with equal certainty, be traced in its law of evolution to one or two superior minds, who, by their penetration and moral force, started the idea of making the theory of equal rights practical; an idea that will finally give citizenship to the Indian and to all dwellers, of honest pursuits, in the land. I do not speak of the more spiritual influences back of these minds. But a soul gives birth to an idea of human and universal interest touching

time or eternity; the idea itself is vitalizing; it awakes the wish of propagandism; another soul is fired with it, and another, and another, until it bursts out in a public expression, and begins to tell in acts and matters of great practical moment. This, perhaps, as a general rule, is the genesis of public opinion, — that is, where it is not positively fabricated. Napoleon manufactured public opinion to suit his own ends. But in the public opinion which is of a more natural growth the process is generally through the enthusiasm of a conception, communicated from one soul to others, which works like leaven until the whole mass is leavened; and thus public opinion, though a seemingly abstract phenomenon, strikes deep down into human responsibility, and is itself, while ever so widely massed and extended, a living, accountable act. Should not the preacher of truth and life study with intense interest the laws of public opinion? For public opinion has laws that are to be found in the philosophy of the mind, or, more simply, of human nature.

One of its laws, we may be assured, is its ready alliance with human depravity, which alliance creates one of the most tenacious forms of public opinion. How strong has been, and continues to be, the principle of war, which, in the bosom of Christianity, a religion of peace, is powerful to arouse nations to the most brutal and destructive rages! And how impotent sounds the counsel of Christian men, idealists as we name them, who advise the disarmament of the powers and the settlement of all disputes by arbitration. But another of the laws of public opinion, which, happily, is yet more strong and outlasting, is that which weaves itself along with the

nobler constitutional principle of right in the human mind and such opinion has the strength of the divine will in it, and must in the end prevail; for, judging from man's history, which is the sketch of God's plan in the past, no public opinion basing itself upon a corrupt principle has within it the power of perpetuity, though it carry all, for the time, before it. Even public opinion which is founded upon right may sometimes die out, if it be of a local nature, or have reference only to a temporary object or order of things, like the powerful opinion that broke down and swept away the relics of tyranny in England; or the revolution of 1688, which, though founded upon just principles, was yet of a defined character that bore in it its own limitations, and was finished when its object was attained. It is only a purely moral or spiritual public opinion which does not utterly die, which has in it the principle of permanence, because the objects of such an opinion always exist, and the absolute truth concerning them never changes, and is essential. An English Quaker, quoted by Robert Southey, says: "Faith overcomes the world: Opinion is overcome by the world. Faith is masterful in its power and effects; it is of divine tendency to renew the heart, and to produce those fruits of purity and holiness which prove the dignity of its original: Opinion has filled the world, enlarged the field of speculation, and been the cause of producing fruits directly opposite to the nature of Faith. Opinion has terminated in schism: Faith is productive of unity." But, looked at in a larger sense, opinion may become faith, opinion may become conviction, and thus be permanent, which is the ten-

dency and hope of the Christian religion. Is not justice, is not humanity, is not freedom, is not righteousness, is not peace, is not love to become the avowed public opinion, governing every public act, vote, and decision, as well as the private belief of men? This is what the preacher is to strive to effect by studying and comprehending intelligently the laws of public opinion, and casting into it constantly the purifying influences of the gospel.

Public opinion must be taken as a fact always existing, always powerful, and the preacher who seeks to do men good in every way should observe carefully the uses and abuses of public opinion, unless he wishes to remain a mere ecclesiastic confined in the mechanism through which he works, like the man hidden in the chess-playing machine. Public opinion has its uses and may become a great progressive force in the world, and, if rightly guided, shall make for truth and righteousness. Wherever public opinion, then, is freest, as in a republican government, it is one of the chief instruments of power, of good together with evil. Where every mind is allowed to have and express an opinion, in this manner men are stimulated to have an opinion, and, if that opinion be vital and forceful, it may become public opinion, and soon grow to be something more than opinion, and enter into the councils of the nation, sit upon the bench of legislation, and rule the whole policy of the land. Public opinion is, therefore, a stupendous lever in a free government, and was never more so than in our country. We are ruled by it. Never was there an enlightened nation so morally independent as a mass, and so intel-

lectually dependent as individuals. I think we are far more so than the English people. This works for good, and sometimes for evil. There is a good example in the Temperance reform. The growth of public opinion on this question in our country has been gradual but steady, and the more slow because the antagonistic opinion had linked itself upon the strong bent of human nature to sensual indulgence. The two opinions have wrestled together in deadly embrace; but the progress of temperance reform, gaining triumph after triumph, is incontestable and wonderful. It is, indeed, public opinion alone that can legitimate such a measure as the prohibitory law. Forty years ago it would not have been popular or legitimate; but the voice of society, guarding its own welfare, now rationally and clearly demands it, whatever may be our individual opinions in regard to wise or unwise methods of temperance reform. Can a minister of the gospel remain apathetic to these outside movements and discussions of men, when law advances upon the steps of public opinion, and can we doubt, in spite of all exceptions, that human law does advance, in equity, justice, and a broader humanity? The uses of public opinion are a matter not to be despised if it makes the laws in a free government; and so, too, the uses and advances of public opinion in reference to all great plans of benevolence. Public opinion is commanding government to found benevolent institutions and schools. It demands, and means to enforce its demand, that government shall take care of its wards, — the Indian and the coloured races, — and having brought them low, shall raise them up to a higher level than

before. It means to see this thing done. Here is the hiding of the popular power, constituting a mysterious but ever-present element, like the air which is "only heard when it speaks in thunder."

Christ, who taught that "none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself," clearly signifies that his preachers cannot stand aloof from public opinion, or anything which so deeply concerns the highest welfare of the race. It is too powerful an instrumentality of benevolent action for a Christian minister to take no heed of it or remain separate from it, though he need not study it like the Jesuit, but like the apostle who studied the bent of thought at Jerusalem and Athens. He should work with and through others and along the lines of human thought and interest. Men are set in families, communities, states, and nations, in order that truth may run more freely upon the all-pervading lines of human sympathy and common thinking.

But the preacher is, nevertheless, in one sense, to be independent of public opinion. He is never to allow his personal will, or conscience, to be submerged and rolled helplessly along by the current of public opinion; for in this way he loses his power to regulate and direct it. Upon no consideration to differ with a predominating public opinion, whether political, or moral, or religious, is slavery instead of Christianity. This is leaving God for man, and forgetting the first elements of faith. This is acknowledging that the prevalent opinion is always right, which is very far from fact, and in this way we could have had no Protestantism and no Christianity. A minister should, therefore, adopt a public

opinion as he does other things, upon moral and religious grounds. This will prevent the assumption of an opinion merely because others adopt it, and will lead to the sifting of motives, to see if, in his own case, the fear of man, or the thirst for notoriety, or the blind interests of party or denomination, or the love of novelty, or the love of antiquity, or personal prejudices and antipathies, or personal affections, or obstinate consistencies, or anything but the pure love of truth and the motive that looks simply to God for His approbation, — is, indeed, the impelling motive of our adhesion to it. And, once more, the Christian preacher, since he is a guide and shepherd of the people, should himself make public opinion, when it is wanting. A sanctified will built up the broken walls of Jerusalem in the face of her enemies. The truly important question of the day, of the moment, is the perpetual opportunity for the application of this principle. We need not ransack the uttermost times and seas for such questions. They are pressing on us. Ideas and opinions were never so powerful as to-day, and it was never more necessary to create the right opinion. While calm, we must act. Sincere differences, it is true, exist among the best Christians; but he who is going to do any good and to move the world forward must have the courage of his convictions, must take a quick and firm stand on what he believes to be right; and perhaps it is not useless to obtain at times a glimpse of the mightiness of the instrumentality of public opinion, to see its truly tremendous workings, to look at its ceaseless shaft moving swiftly, silently, to and fro, whirling the million wheels, brains, thoughts, activities, emotions,

passions, policies of the nation and the world — for public opinion is the central engine of the moral world. A glance, then, at the power of this agency may make it a more religiously grand — yes, in some aspects, solemn — subject to the Christian preacher. No wonder the priests and rulers "feared the people." The voice of the people is sometimes the voice of God, because, through this popular voice, God has wrought His own will in spite of the opinions of the wisest. This voice changes religious as well as political systems, now for good, now for evil; but in the end for good, if Christian preachers and people strive ceaselessly, with wisdom and love, to shape public opinion for good ends. They cannot ignore it.

Thomas à Kempis wrote earnestly for a monastic life, he pleaded eloquently for solitude and silence, and he affirmed that he always deplored the time he spent in the society of men, from the lowering of his spiritual life that it occasioned; but he went against his own views by writing a book that has blessedly influenced the religious opinions and lives of myriads. We cannot secede from our race. We are not to pray to be taken out of the world but to be kept from the evil. Contemplation must be mingled with action. Even sometimes, to the utter discontent of his own spirit, the preacher must ply his vocation in troubled and stormy waters. Better, indeed, the whirlwind than the stagnation of public opinion. Through the tempest, wisdom, courage and faith may steer, but in the dead calm all things corrupt, and

"The very deep did rot;"

the principles of right, truth, and nobleness drop out of the soul, and it becomes the easy conquest of every kind

of base tyranny. And this leads me to speak a word I have long had in my heart, of the great want with us as a nation.

Every nation that possesses power and perpetuity has some profound idea or sentiment, or public opinion, it might be called, more or less true perhaps though it must have some truth in it, that moulds and holds it together. It enters into the life of the people and makes them all to drink into the same character and spirit.

This was true even of the ancient nations. Greece was sustained for centuries by the power of the intellectual idea. It was a struggle of cultivated mind with barbarism. The Greek was always to assert, under all circumstances, the superiority of the Greek mind over mere brute forces. The unity and permanence of the Roman empire lay in the idea of the right and supremacy of Roman law. The Roman recognized his own law as the gift of the gods, as unchangeably just, as one at Rome and Athens, as the law which should govern all nations. He was the chosen legislator of the world. He had a right to govern and to subdue the earth to Roman law; and this public opinion shaped him into the resistless legionary.

Modern, half-barbarian Russia up to this time has had a simple spiritual principle that refines her people and fuses the vast mass together. It is the paternal idea of its government. That government stands in the earthly place of God — the Father. All Russians are children of the Czar. His authority is looked upon as divine. The rudest boor is made in some degree unselfish and heroic by the operation of this higher sentiment, con-

nected as it is with the religious idea of a Russian theocracy. It is indeed a poor kind of government for man, because it is affected by human imperfection, but it has had its day with a rude people. In France, notwithstanding her revolutions and changes, there has ever existed a fine but powerful principle, half divine and half profane, half an idea and half a sentiment, which has kept the nation alive and made it strong and united. Napoleon seized upon it and called it "*la gloire*." It is a sentiment which now and then springs up into a flame and consumes selfishness and what is grossly material. It kindles an ideal of the honour of France, and her right to the first place in all that is great, brilliant, and progressive. All are one here, however split into Bonapartist, or Legitimist, or Republican factions. In Germany, now in reality, as it has been for centuries in aspiration and yearning, the idea of German unity has pressed the nation on to higher and higher common attainments in statesmanship, philosophy, and letters. In England, the great fusing or uniting principle is loyalty, — loyalty to the constitution and sovereign of England. However weakened, this has thus far held fast in all strains. It is true that higher sentiments flow into this one and purify and strengthen it. More truly divine ideas of freedom and Christian faith enter into and sanctify this principle; but the constitution and sovereignty of England, deep in an Englishman's heart, are received as the historic embodiment of English liberty and religion. This idea of loyalty makes the Englishman, with all his coarser traits, chivalric and spirited. It forms a bond of brotherhood through that vast empire.

In times of trial, it brings forth a noble and exalted self-sacrifice. It gives play to the poetic and heroic emotions.

Now, it has sometimes seemed to me that our chief want as a nation was a lack of some one idea or sentiment, some cohesive principle which would bind us together and bring forth truly great, national, and unselfish elements in our character. The fire of some higher love, to fuse us in one, and to burn up every miserable and separating obstacle, is what we want. We need something to arouse the brother-heart, to refine the gross earthliness, to lift us above the material view of things. We are vainly seeking national unity and greatness in the pathway of self-interest. It is the striving of material motives; and in this low way we shall never find the path to national greatness, but for this there must be union in the spirit of the people, in their devotion to some one lofty and divine idea.

But have we no national idea to keep us alive and bind us together — East and West, North and South? Surely we have, if we will not heap mountains of earth upon it and extinguish it, and if our preachers and men of faith will be true to themselves and the truth they advocate. It is the idea of humanity, — of carrying up our own and the common humanity to its highest level of perfect manhood, — of a manhood which can only be found and perfected in Christ. We are to realize this truth that men are united and made complete not only because they are created one in nature, but because they are one in Christ, the common and divine Head of humanity.

There is a character drawn in very vivid lines by one of our own historians, — the character of William, the father of the Dutch Republic. Was ever a nation more prostrated and submerged under the deep waters of every imaginable woe than was his nation? But how cheerful was his trust in the idea of a Divine guidance and headship of the nation, even after that great blow — the fall of Haarlem! "But as, notwithstanding our efforts," he wrote, "it has pleased God Almighty to dispose of Haarlem according to His divine will, shall we, therefore, deny and deride His holy Word? Has the strong arm of the Lord thereby grown weaker? Has His Church, therefore, come to nought? You ask if I have entered into a firm treaty with any great king or potentate; to which I answer, that before I ever took up the cause of the oppressed Christians in these provinces, I had entered into a close alliance with the King of kings, and I am firmly convinced that all who put their trust in Him shall be saved by His Almighty hand." Let Christian preachers breathe the same higher trust into the public opinion of this country, and awaken the idea of a spiritual unity for the development of a perfect humanity here, in this free land, making first America and then the world truly Christian.

What is the golden mean between the dead sermon and the sensational sermon?

The question, as it stands, is a contradiction in terms, for, if "sensational" be the converse to "dead," it means the same as "alive," and surely nothing could be a golden mean between what is dead and what is

alive; yet the intent of the question is plain, and it has reference to the distinction, which is a real one, between true and false sensationalism in preaching.

The age we live in is a sensational age. It is not, at all events, a dead age. Such activity, such wonderful things occurring, such brilliant scientific discoveries, such peering into mysteries, such discontent of life, such unsatisfied ambition, such planning and doing as if nothing had been done, such novel, startling, and audacious forms both of good and evil, constitute a state of things that has never before been seen to such an extent, and it is impossible to say to what it will come. There is electricity in the air. Everything is surcharged with it. The newspaper, bringing the ends of the earth together like the points of a galvanic battery, gives us a shock, and we almost see the flash produced by a skilful manipulation of the popular sensational nerve. The literature, especially the fictitious literature, in the hands of young people, instead of being the healthy study of nature as in Scott's novels, and in such a story as Blackmore's "Lorna Doone," or the more subjective development of character and thought as in "Henry Esmond," "Hypatia," and the works of George Eliot, or even of the pure affections, is so exclusively sensational, that it seems as if there could be nothing hereafter new to the young, nothing of "wonder, hope, and love," and assuredly nothing of horror, shame, and detestable vice. In such a time, for preaching alone to be dead through its dulness is, to say the least, unfortunate. It is too much like the famous iceberg in the green meadow.

Let the sermon fail in other things, but let it be, at all

events, alive in interest and attraction. "Eloquence," Emerson says, "must be attractive. The virtue of books is to be readable, and of orators to be interesting." There should be substantial and original thought in every sermon, but no matter how much thought you have in your sermon, if people will not listen to it, what is the use? There is a sensationalism then which is genuine and true, which means life, and which is the communication of living truth and thought. To take the lowest view, although I do not quite agree with this kind of metaphysics, it is through the senses, or what is called the sense-perception, that we obtain the primitive material of knowledge, and take the first step toward the acquisition and formation of ideas. The senses, through their capacity of feeling and imagination, gather together what the reason works upon, and from which it brings forth its more perfect ideas. The sense of things felt strongly is the preacher's arsenal of effective weapons. The allegory of "the ewe lamb" was a piece of exquisite sensationalism that Nathan, the prophet-preacher, employed to wing the truth to the king's conscience. The appeal of Whitefield to the angel flying heavenward, and his bold use of the passing thunder-storm to intensify the solemnity of religious exhortation, were in the highest degree sensational, but not on that account less genuine and forcible. Pulpit style should not lack this vital quality, which makes it popular. Feeling that gives birth to lively illustration, to pictures, to vividness of fancy, to simple pathos, to the sympathetic and unreserved expression of belief, to honest love of good and to honest hate of evil, never fails to awaken correspondent feeling. No danger of deadness

here. No fear of dulness where the heart is really moved with a sincere passion to so set forth the truth as to move other men and save them. Often the church's hearth is cleanly swept, the fuel is laid in the most scientific fashion, and the patient congregation wait to be warmed and fed, but what is wanting? — fire. True feeling in the preacher is wanting. Divine truth needs to be taken out of cold abstractions and cast into concrete forms; it must become alive through the feeling of the preacher. There are not many in an American congregation who do not believe in a God, or in Jesus Christ, who was sent to reveal the Father's love to men; but yet they do not feel these great truths enough to make them real for their eternal life. The preacher who does feel them makes others feel them. His argument is not that kind of reasoning which entraps the intellect for a while, but it also wins the heart, the conscience, and the will.

There is, it may thus be seen, a true sensationalism in preaching without which the sermon would be dead. How is this to be distinguished from false sensationalism?

The distinction between true and false sensationalism in preaching appears to me chiefly to consist in two things, namely, true knowledge and moral earnestness. The false preacher has no real and thorough knowledge of his subject. Neither by experience nor by study has he come to the clear possession of truth. The truth is not his, is not inwrought in him, so that he knows that of which he speaks. He is, in so far, a charlatan, who makes a show of knowledge of which he is not master. In like manner one may call himself a scientist and deal

out his opinions and prophecies — very sensational ones — whose knowledge is entirely superficial. A man who has read a few books on art and seen a few pictures may esteem himself an art critic, fitted to judge of the great works; whereas a knowledge of art comes through the experience and observation of a lifetime, and is perhaps the inheritance of two or three generations of culture. Taste is a plant of slow growth. So, indeed, in some sense, is the capacity to teach religious truth; which capacity is the fruit of religious culture, meditation, work and personal experience. The sensational preacher, in this sense, passes for more than he is worth. He makes a self-display through the assumed knowledge of truth that he has never really grasped, that he has never made his actual possession. Of course he must make up for this deficiency. One man does it by dogmatism. He calls hard names and pronounces bigoted opinions. He asserts where he cannot reason. Another hides his superficialness under a veil of smart and grotesque language. The whole American continental field of religious slang is ransacked. The profanity is but thinly masqued by calling it a sermon. The "Sam Jones" (he may be a much better man than I who say it) style of preacher does more harm than good, because he abuses not only the "modesty of nature," but the Christian liberty, which is not lawlessness in speech any more than in conduct. I would give a large liberty; I would not exclude native humour from the pulpit, nor story-telling, nor pithy illustration, nor home-thrusts at hard cases, nor homely wit, but I would exclude that kind of vulgar exaggeration and low buffoonery which the monks of the sixteenth century

indulged in, and a class of preachers of the nineteenth century practise, as commending the gospel to the common people, whereas they only increase the prevailing tendency among the illiterate as well as the educated, to make a jest of truth, and take all the nobleness and heart out of divine things. The fault of irreverence is a crying fault of the country and of the times. Besides, such coarse and hot spicery makes it very difficult for the simpler diet of the gospel to be relished at all. The language of the English Bible was just the golden mean between the popular and the learned speech. It was plain Saxon-English, which did not stoop to the vulgar and low, nor deal in the high and bookish.

The second more profound difference between true and false sensationalism consists in moral earnestness. A man who is thoroughly in earnest may say almost anything, because by saying it he does not mean to produce a sensation, but to arouse men to goodness. The whole subject of preaching to the emotions, or the emotional element in preaching, is an important subject by itself, which I will not now take up. Neither will the truly earnest man say anything that is absolutely lowering to the truth. What the preacher says should not end in a laugh, but should be a word lodged in the heart of the sinner, spoken with the sincere motive to save him from his sins. Love can say what logic and the intellect cannot, because love makes the object and subject one, and prepares the way by a hidden and genial force for the reception of the truth. Here the personality of the preacher is of the utmost importance; and his spiritual condition and conviction of the truth, if it has wrought

in him its own spirit, even the spirit of him who is the truth, will tell upon all he utters, and make him, thus speaking the truth in love, an eloquent witness and advocate for Christ. What is eloquence? It is certainly not sensationalism in the common meaning of the term. Eloquence is something more profound. It does not move and agitate the mere surface of the mind. It goes beneath the sense or the sensational, and enters the depths of personal and spiritual being. It is the power of soul upon soul, the reciprocity of influence, so that the thoughts and feelings of the speaker are communicated as by a magnetic power to the hearer, and the two are made morally and spiritually one, by the fusing influence of the truth uttered in the fire of a strong purpose. Then the minds of men are moulded like clay in the hands of the potter. The real force of eloquence is seen to reside in the essential qualities of the inmost affections and energies of the soul, which, when stirred to their depths, as the love of a Christ-like preacher for his fellow-men and their eternal interests can alone do, produce those lasting effects, those fruits of the Spirit, which have followed the preaching of the Apostles, and of the greatest preachers since their day.

True eloquence can be distinguished from false eloquence, or false sensationalism, in these ways: that the true is thorough in knowledge, while the false is superficial; the true has moral earnestness, while the false has no depth of real sincerity; the true aims for the production of character, the false aims to produce an excitement; the true is enduring, while the false is ephemeral; the true strives through impression for ultimate convic-

tion, while the false strives merely for immediate sensation; the true ends in the subject, the false ends in self; the true springs from religious enthusiasm, while the false springs from a love of intellectual display; the true is deep and spiritual, while the false plays upon the senses, the superficial nerves of feeling, the outer surface of the mind.

"*During my short ministry of five years, the 'Preparatory Service' before each Communion season has been very trying to me, — the subject-matter and the choice of texts alike troubling me greatly. Of course, so long as the texts in* 1 *Cor.* xi. 26–29 *supplied material, I experienced no want. I have also used texts relating to the Passover, and some from* 1*st John. But I never have that freedom in preparing for this office that I enjoy in my ordinary pulpit ministration. Can you help me?*"

The question, springing from so earnest a desire, assuredly bears with it no implied thought that the "Preparatory Service" itself is an unnecessary or unreasonable one. It seems to be rather regarded as an extraordinary one. It is, truly, a most rational service, for there is, in a healthy mind, a sense of dignity which forbids it to enter thoughtlessly on any great act. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. Surprise has been called an element of beauty, but it may be an element of confusion. When a young man, I once visited Palestine. We had climbed to the top of a steep hill, from

which it was expected that Jerusalem would be seen, but it proved not to be so. My state of expectation therefore subsided, and after riding quietly on without incident for a while, by a sudden turn we came unexpectedly in full sight of the holy city crowning a distant eminence, and so great was my surprise, that I found myself on my knees upon the ground with hardly a consciousness of what I was doing. The thoughts that rushed torrent-like into the mind overcame me; and when I rose I walked bare-headed all the way until we passed into the gate of the city. This was not a singular experience. The same thing has happened to other travellers; and, in the time of the Crusades, we know how a whole host was moved simultaneously by the thoughts and eternal associations connected with this spot. The mind craves some sort of preparation or self-adjustment in order to meet a great event, to be ushered into a great presence, to come up to a lofty height of experience, intellectual or spiritual. One's republican pride would prevent him from being disturbed at the sight of a king, but to meet a man like Napoleon, or Bismarck, or a poet like Goethe, or a truly holy man whose godlike deeds had proved him to be filled with the very spirit of God, we should desire to collect our thoughts and to try to lessen the distance between ourselves and these men by rising, as it were, to the best of the common humanity which exists in all. In like manner, a thoughtful man would not care to step into the chamber of a dying person, without an internal prayer to bring the soul into accord with the scene and the approach to eternal realities.

But the instances noted are small and earthly when compared with the approach to the scene of the Lord's Supper. Without wishing to give it more of mystic import than the Scriptures warrant, there is cause to hold it as the highest act of Christian worship. For while a bloodless sacrifice, it is still the spiritual presentation of the offering of the Lamb of God for our sins. It embodies the central truth of the gospel. The divine and the human blend together as in no other act of religion. The Eternal Son of God took our human nature upon him in order that by his sacrifice he might redeem it from sin and give it eternal life. And this is the record that God hath given to us, eternal life, and this life is in His Son. According to the gospel, this is the source of our spiritual life. Whether the words of Christ apply directly to the Lord's Supper or not, and while explaining them as they should be explained in a spiritual sense, it is true that "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

And yet, again, the presence of the Lord himself at his table is so especially implied and vouchsafed, that to come there thoughtless and unprepared in heart and life is not only opposed to Christian reason but is incurring weighty responsibility.

The "Preparatory Lecture," as it is called in New England, is an honoured institution. President Stiles, of Yale College, in the last century alludes frequently in his journal to his "Sacramental Lecture," as he terms it; but this is not to be confounded with the Thursday evening "lecture" of still older Pilgrim times, though

it may have united with that or grown out of it. In all Christian churches, a service of this kind is the recognition of the need of the Church's preparation for its loftiest and sweetest act of adoring consecration. The Primitive Church celebrated it in the gloom of the Catacomb on the altar-tomb of a martyr. The "Retreats" of the Catholic Church, for the purpose of meditation and prayer, have also the nature of this work of preparation to bring back the heart to its highest love and service. While more of the spirit of meditation and devotion should be mingled with it, it is well that in New England it continues to be a simple *lecture*, not a formal sermon. It is mainly practical and instructive. It is the familiar talk of the spiritual guide of the household, and is all, as it were, within the family, to prepare its members for the presence of the divine Master among them. Not that he is not with them always, but there are times of more special, tender, and solemn interview, when, as it were, the doors are shut, the world and its noises are heard no more, and in the silence of self-recollection Christ presents himself for the love and affectionate intercourse of his believing ones.

The topics for this "Preparatory Service" would seem naturally to divide themselves into three classes, namely, clear instruction in regard to the historical foundation and the doctrine of the Lord's Supper; practical suggestions or lessons as to self-examination in the religious life; incitement to higher personal love of and closer spiritual union with Christ.

1. In regard to the historic origin of the Lord's Supper, not only the passage alluded to by my corre-

spondent in the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians, but the fifth chapter also, where allusion is made to the Hebrew Passover, is applicable; and this would open the whole series of texts from the Old Testament having reference to the original germ of the Passover and the ancient covenant of God with His people, of which the feast of the Lord's Supper is the finished antitype. The frequent passages in the prophetic books of the Old Testament and the Psalms, pointing to the greater offering that was preparing, and the moral teaching that runs through them, are directly appropriate. It is a mistake ministers sometimes make that the Old Testament can afford them no material for this service. But the actual institution of the Supper as given us in the Gospels, and especially the narrative of John's Gospel, with the discourses of Christ in the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters, form the best sources of teaching for this occasion. Preachers really have no right to preach a formal sermon on any and every Christian topic in an indiscriminate fashion to meet this emergency, when there is so much specific material at hand. The development, too, of doctrine, — especially of the doctrine of the Incarnation and Atonement, as taught in the fifth chapter of Romans, second of Colossians, fifth of Ephesians, and indeed in every epistle of the New Testament, belongs essentially to this preparatory service. Here we come to the root-idea of sacrifice for sin. What Christ is in his relations to all men, and especially to believers; that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself;" that Christ is the true Vine who both bears us and spiritually

nourishes us with his own blood, — this is to be set forth. The mystery of redemption is here, not entirely to be explained, as no sacrifice of love, even by the human heart, is entirely to be explained, but affording a theme for inexhaustible study and thought. The doctrine also of the unity of the Church, as presented in the very words of the institution of the Supper, as well as in the tenth chapter of the First of Corinthians, opens another field of practical instruction. Incarnation, Atonement, Reconciliation, the Unity of the Church and the Communion of Saints, are some of the doctrines that cluster about this sacred feast. This is especially an occasion for the building up of believers in the faith, and in the doctrine of Christ, itself being the most lively and powerful preacher.

2. The apostle says: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." The duty of self-examination which has sometimes been carried to an extreme of self-inquisition, thus becoming a curse instead of a blessing, a poison instead of a medicine, is, nevertheless, when wholesomely exercised, enjoined both by Scripture and reason. We ought now and then to stop in the rush of life and ask ourselves what we are and whither tending, or how can we know what our true condition is. There is no simpler and better rule of religious self-examination than to lay ourselves alongside the requirements of the Ten Commandments as interpreted by the higher spiritual law of Christ, the law of love, including the two great classes of duties toward God and toward our neighbour. To lecture in a practical or heart-searching but kind way on the com-

mandments, from the Christian point of view, would be greatly profitable. Hence spring amendment and restitution. Hence, above all, springs humility, without which we are truly unworthy to approach the Feast. Purity guards it with a flaming sword. Malice, impureness, unforgiveness, hate, pride, love of power, covetousness, hypocrisy, deceit, and all uncharitableness flee from it, and we feed upon the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The feast is a holy feast. Repentance is its real preparation.

3. Incitement to the higher love of and the closer union with Christ and the brethren, seems to have been the disciples' chief preparation by the Lord himself for the Last Supper. Here the words of the Lord in John's Gospel, and the words of the Holy Spirit, who is also called "the Spirit of Christ" in the epistles of John, especially the first of them, are our best guides. We kindle the fire at its source. We draw close to the Saviour's heart. As it is sometimes celebrated, the Lord's Supper is indeed but a cold memorial. It should be filled with an affectionate tenderness and a heavenly love. Its very preparation should stir the fountains both of human and divine love as the angel of the Lord came down and stirred the waters of healing and blessing. Thus the highest note of the feast of the Lord's Supper is really not faith, nor repentance, nor even love, but joy, — as in the old Moravian hymn: —

> "Come, approach to Jesus' table,
> Taste that food incomparable,
> Which to us is freely given
> As an antepast of heaven."

Will you give a criticism of the following plan of a sermon which was lately preached, not without effect, at the opening of a series of revival services?

1 Sam. x. 26. "And there went with him a band of men whose hearts God had touched."

With what glowing prospects does Saul, the new-crowned king, begin his reign; chosen by God himself; gifted with an impressive physical presence; filled with the Spirit of God; accepted and supported by all the people, and especially surrounded by such a noble body-guard.

I. God, in touching the hearts of these men, filled them —

1st. With reverence for the cause of which he was the representative.

2d. With devotion to him as that representative.

3d. With a commendable zeal in service to that cause.

4th. With wisdom and ability as councillors.

5th. With personal unselfishness in their service.

II. Every chosen servant of God needs to-day as a body-guard, "a band of men whose hearts God has touched."

1st. With the zeal of pardon and acceptance.

2d. With a sanctified zeal in God's service.

3d. With a burning desire for the salvation of souls.

4th. With a mighty faith in God as to the results of the work.

Not quite enough of the plan has been here given to indicate the thought pursued beyond the most general idea, and it is difficult to see where the main stress of the

sermon lies. No doubt it was effective; the earnestness of the preacher and the occasion tended to make it so; but we should see this even in the plan, — as in the case of Dr. Bushnell's sermons, his very plans reveal the peculiar power of the discourse. It ran through the bones. The text is a happy one, as well as the subject drawn from it. An accommodated text is often interesting in itself when, as in the present instance, there is a real resemblance of ideas between the original and the applied use of it, so that both are based on the same fundamental principle. There is, in such a case, no strained or fanciful similarity, even if there be no absolute identity of ideas. The devotion to a good cause and to its chosen leader, is found in the passage as it occurs in the First Book of Samuel, and also in the sermon wherein the preacher employs it as a text. It was the cause of God in both cases, for Saul was anointed by the prophet, in the prophet's own words, to "renew the kingdom." It was in both cases to build up the true Israel.

The principal rhetorical criticism of this plan is, that instead of making two grand divisions with regular heads under them, the first applying to Saul and the second to the spiritual leadership of the Church, it would have been better to put all that was said concerning Saul in the introduction, which is really here the explanation of the text and its circumstances, thus furnishing an opportunity to give in a natural and interesting way the account of Saul and his relations to the kingdom of Israel in his day. A magnificent character, this Saul, both for good and evil, and full of moral lessons. His life is a tragedy drawn with full and powerful strokes of the inspired pencil. It forms

one of the most dramatic and pathetic, as well as morally forcible histories of the Old Testament; and this introduction would be a basis for the instruction of the sermon, and would lend a living organic unity to the whole. I would thus, after this historical introduction, deduce from it a general proposition of a more spiritual nature, and found my real sermon on this proposition. As it is, there are two formal grand divisions, the one of Saul and the other of sermon. So that there is a tendency to monotonousness in the treatment, and much force of fresh application is lost. In the plan given, just the same qualities of zeal, devotion, and unselfish service described in the first division, are repeated inevitably in the second, with only differing circumstances. There is no progress in the thought.

In the phraseology, too, of the divisions, or of the statement of heads, the language, as it seems to me, is not simple enough. The adjectives "sanctified," "burning," "mighty," are unnecessary; and "the seal of pardon and acceptance" is a phrase which some in the congregation might not understand. If simple language is found anywhere it should be in the plan. We wish to have divisions — the turning points of the discourse — to be unadorned. They should be plain solid statements, as plain as possible, of propositions to be proved, and nothing more.

In the second grand division, as it stands, the second and third subordinate heads are too much alike to be made separate heads at all, and, therefore, one of them is unnecessary; it is, indeed, rare that a sermon needs more than three divisions, and more divisions usually make scattering fire.

The real unity of a sermon drawn from this passage lies in the phrase, "whose hearts God had touched." This is its deepest thought, — the root of all. It was no mere human interest with which these hearts were moved, having in it the elements of time, change, and selfishness, but it was a divine interest wrought by the Spirit of God, aiming at His kingdom and pure of all lower worldly ends. It was eternal in its nature, and, in a Christian sense, sprang from the love of Christ, or personal union with him in his work. This is the under-current of the theme, its main thought, which, in some way or another, should be wrought into every portion of the sermon.

To reconstruct the plan in a more compact way, to give it effective unity, and to put it also into more every-day language, and yet to preserve its good points, it might, perhaps, be recast, I venture to suggest, into something like this form : —

Introduction. — The graphic pourtrayal of the history of Saul and his relations to the Kingdom of God in his day, his virtues, supernatural aids and opportunities, weaknesses, and crimes ; his beginnings in the obedience of God and his terrible fall from God's favour ; and, as drawn directly from the lessons of his life, and of this special passage of his life taken as a text, the

General Proposition. — The need of men divinely fitted to support their chosen leaders in the work of God's kingdom.

1st. Of men whose hearts are renewed by the Holy Spirit.

2d. Of men who have a Christlike desire to save their fellow-men.

3d. Of men with faith in the success of God's work.

Conclusion. — The lessons from such a subject are many and rich. Certainly two might be mentioned in which the preacher could make for himself room to say the most heart-searching as well as encouraging and practical words, calculated to stir up his own and the Church's activity.

1. A lesson to ministers. Ministers can do more through inspiring and setting others to work than they can through their own exclusive labours however faithful and exhausting. This is a great gift of wisdom. They themselves are multiplied a hundred-fold. This has been true of the most successful preachers. A working church in which every talent is brought out for the good of men is a minister's epistle known and read of all, his most eloquent preaching.

2. A lesson to the Church. Earnest prayer is needed for the Holy Spirit to awaken new love and zeal in the work of building up the kingdom of God.

It is my hearers who say that I am a very powerful preacher; and I have, indeed, rarely had a regular and attentive listener who was not converted to Christ. But my preaching is not attractive. Men are not drawn to listen to me, and frequently they are repelled. Ought I to make my preaching less evangelical, forcible, and pungent? Ought I to try more to please men and less to persuade them to repent and believe? I know I desire the salvation of men; that I would count it a light thing

to die to save the souls about me. But I seem to be repelling men instead of drawing them. What shall I do?

It is quite impossible for me to speak regarding a stranger, but this seems to me a voice of almost painful sincerity; and yet a man who believes he has by his preaching led souls to Christ, should feel encouraged and rewarded. In so far as one has done this, let him truly rejoice and go on doing the same; for it is not every minister who can speak so confidently of the good results of his labours. It may be that the preacher is unfortunately placed. The round peg has got into the square hole, or the square peg into the round hole. That sometimes happens. Divine grace would not have fitted the apostle Peter to do the apostle John's work. He who breaks up the fallow ground is not always the one who garners the harvest. No genuine labourer's work is lost. A man who is ready to die for others, whether he please them or not, will influence them as no smooth-tongued rhetorician can. Yet the power to win men may be wanting. What is attractiveness in a preacher? It is the same thing of its kind though not degree that made Christ attractive. It is the Christlike spirit, so difficult to describe and analyze, but in which the divine elements of persuasion are mixed, — the righteousness in which the Father's will is supreme; the spotless purity; the courage that meets with serenity every evil; the self-sacrifice that drinks the cup of suffering to its dregs; the humility that is willing to become as the offscouring of the earth to reach the lowliest; the forgivenesss that passes by injuries; the love that takes the foulest into

its embrace and lays down life to cleanse and save sinful humanity. How rare for the preacher to have these Christlike elements of persuasion even imperfectly! One may preach powerfully the doctrine of fear, and more than that, may have risen to a higher apprehension of truth and of the mind, so that he has learned to preach "right," and to drive the shaft home to the reason and conscience, who yet may not have learned to preach the gospel, — the thing that wins, or divine love to sinners. This is the all-comprehending love by which a man (since he is made so) is compelled to love God because God loves him. When he knows and believes this he yields. It is divine love that wins as does human love at last, for you cannot convince a man into heaven any more than you can drive him.

It may possibly be that it is only a little thing after all that makes a good man unattractive, — an ungracious manner that freezes up the current of personal magnetism, or a harsh voice (that was the reason of Savonarola's ill-success in the pulpit till he remedied it), or a dogmatic method of argumentation, or an abstract style of metaphysical circuitousness, or a rhetorical superficiality that glitters but does not warm and penetrate, or an awkward delivery, or a drawling accent, — some little thing, but still offensive to persons who cannot recognize real manhood and true worth beneath a repelling exterior. The Abbé Maury recommended to a young preacher that he should now and then burn some grains of incense to the graces; one might do this without becoming a pulpit courtier, which is worse, if anything, than a pulpit buffoon.

How may we use such a truth and class of truths as Christ's temptation in the wilderness, belonging to his supernatural nature, for instruction in the pulpit? Was He a subject for such temptation as assails men, or could He have yielded to temptation like others?

These questions are quite deep and it would take long to answer them. I can only assert the general principle that what our Lord was, while in this world, was meant for our instruction in righteousness, and that nothing is affirmed more clearly in the Scriptures. Nothing happened to or was allowed to be recorded of him that was not designed for the imitation of the human soul, for the redemption of men from the power of evil, and for their culture in the spiritual life. His were the acts of the ideal man who gathered humanity into himself, as a perfect example, and who came into the world to manifest God in humanity, and to enshrine himself within the human spirit; the kingdom he founded was within man; and even in the unique events of his supernatural manifestation, in the baptism in which no man could be baptized, he never removed himself entirely out of the sphere of that humanity which he took that he might be a high priest who could be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. The Lord's temptation, though alone in the wilderness in conflict with the principle of evil, does not take itself out of this category, and is one of the noblest and even most practical of truths for the Christian pulpit, though it cannot be treated in a common and hasty way, and with little thought. It peculiarly

adapts itself to the profound meditation of young ministers about to enter upon their life-work, and is fitted to search the motives of ministerial character beyond almost any portion of the New Testament. It is history and likewise symbol. It is fact and also spirit. It occurred between the baptism and the entrance of Christ upon his public ministry, and it sets the moral standard for the trial and establishment of that ministry, and, indeed, for the kingdom of God in the world, without which neither of them can make headway or prove successful. While we should strive to be careful in our reverential respect for the divine nature of Christ, yet we may lose even the divine lesson of his life if we lose the great lesson of his humanity, as the emptying of himself (κένωσις) of divine power and riches, to prove the power of entire dependence of the human upon the divine will, such as every man may realize who follows Christ.

The decision of the second question whether Christ could have yielded to temptation, and if not, would it have been a real temptation such as comes to men, is predicated upon the truth that if Christ could not sin, he was free to sin, and though there was a necessity for him not to sin, yet he had the freedom to do so. Our Lord, as a man, was temptable, or else the idea of his being the Redeemer of all men could not be true; and temptability is not sin. For what is temptation? It is that evil power which appeals to a free personality in such a way as to give it a direction from good toward evil, and when the evil presented becomes a real influence in the heart, though not necessarily so that the heart consents to it, it forms a temptation. Christ truly was tempted:

but it is said of us that we are tempted when we are drawn away of our own lusts and enticed. Was Christ thus tempted? Or did Christ have a sinful nature? Did he have a fallen nature like that derived from Adam? Some go so far as to believe even this, and see in it a mighty truth that, in spite of this tremendous fact of his assumption of a sinful nature, he did not sin, but so went down to the depths of our fallen nature to raise us up entirely, completely. But we are not called upon to believe this incredible thing, that Christ shared our sinful and depraved nature. The new Adam was the seed of a new spiritual race that rose from the estate of sin into newness of life in Christ Jesus, but he, the unfallen Son of God, stooped very low to raise us up. He put on the weakness of humanity. He was tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Temptation came to Christ, as to every man, in two ways, from without and from within. He was tempted from without by the condition and circumstances of his earthly life. He was a true man and suffered trial by hunger, thirst, cold, poverty, bodily injuries, and mental griefs, or the bodily and mental trials belonging personally to himself, as well as from the allurements of the world, and their appeal to human ambition, power, and pleasure. He was also capable of being tempted, as a man, from within, by spiritual appeals to evil, call them from the Evil One, but these temptations which in ordinary men appeal to disorderly and ill-regulated desires, found nothing to lay hold of in his perfectly pure nature. It was then from without, from the wants of the bodily nature and the allurements of the world, as in the actual

temptation recorded in the New Testament, that the Son of man seems to have been approached. Here he was tempted like unto us. His temptation, therefore, though unique, was a true and universal instance of human temptation. He was here also our brother and our example. He alone, however, exhibited divine virtue under human conditions. He showed that sin is not an essential condition of our human nature, but only an incident that springs from our own abnormal weakness and fault. Sin does not "have its ground in the organism of human nature, but is the rebellion of a created will against the divine law, as an act of free-will not otherwise to be explained." Thus evil is not a human development but a human choice. While Christ, as a true man, endowed with free-will, was temptable, yet he sinned not, and in a true man, like Christ, there need be no sin in his human nature. He overcame temptation *as a man*, through relying upon divine help; and, therefore, he can help those who are tempted, for all can find encouragement in trial and victory in temptation in him who met in fair conflict the very power and principle of evil. And as it sometimes happens that in the beginning of doing Christ's work, the temptation comes to his ministers to take up the work in their own strength, say of reason, or scholarship, or character, or intellectual and moral power, or lower forces even than these, and not in the divine will and power, so the temptation of Christ speaks to the ministry as with a voice from heaven. The apostle Paul in Arabia, John in Patmos, Luther in Wartburg Castle, met the same temptation in the earlier stages of their public ministry, and overcame it by looking to Christ

and his victory. If there be anything which I have noticed in others and myself as the ground of failure or of small success in the ministerial work, it has been this failure to bring the work into subordination to the divine conditions of power and success, — the total surrender to the will of God; and not only this, but the willingness to do His work in His way, and not in our own. The ministry is an intellectual profession, calling upon the fullest energies of a consecrated manhood; and ministers, as a class, are men of mind, else they would be engaged in some lower and less taxing work; but the exercise of the mind gives a sense of power, and this awakes a reliance upon self, and sometimes a feeling of independence of God. Selfishness in his work is a minister's shrewdest temptation. Power in himself tempts him to love power for power's sake. To be weak is to be miserable, — this is human sentiment; and to be a powerful man, and preach powerful sermons, is commonly held to be the highest praise that could be bestowed; but the apostolic sentiment was "for when I am weak, then am I strong," — strong in a divine fulness of power that pours into a human mind which empties itself of self-confidence and self-seeking. Not that mental forces, such as stalwart reasoning and scholarly knowledge, are of no account; this would be fanaticism; but that they are not those divine qualities of power in the pulpit by which the greatest work man can do is done. A London paper, commenting upon an eminent American preacher, says: "He leaves no system of theology or church government, and his influence therefore ended with his life. He was a great preacher, but nothing

else." If he were a great preacher, his influence is eternal, and will endure when systems of theology and church governments have faded into nothing; but to be this, and to do this greatest work, a man must learn somewhat of that true humility comprehended in Thomas à Kempis's wonderful words, "*ama nesciri.*"

In doing God's work, a man cannot grasp for that kingdom of the world which Satan ever promises him. The struggle surely will come to the best, and the choice will be seductively presented when he must decide whether he will work by his own power and in accord with his own will, or in self-denial and submission to the will of God. He will choose between the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of God. The tendency that corrupted the apostolic church, and reared in its place a vast system of worldly power, was this departure from the original idea of the ministry as a pure instrument of the will of God. To preach the Word in the wisdom of men, and through learning, eloquence, logic, authority, riches and power of the world, was not for the building up of a spiritual, but of an external kingdom, false to the core, whether in the fourth or nineteenth century. If ministers show themselves as greedy for power, place, fame, honours, emoluments, as men of other professions and the world, they may gain their reward, but they bid adieu to the advancement of the gospel through their agency. Christ's work must be kept pure from the world. This was the teaching of Christ's temptation, and it revealed the divine foundation of his spiritual kingdom of faith, love, and righteousness. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Christ conquered

evil by refusing to use any worldly weapon in a spiritual warfare. His children were not to strive. They were to lose their life. They were to give up the world. They were to overcome evil with good. They were to suffer persecution. They were not to halve power with Cæsar. They were not to depend upon money. They were not to be great in the mere worldly sense. They were not to seem but to be devout. They were to seek not the praise of men but of God. They were to bear reproach with meekness. They were to meet opposition with gentleness. They were to preach the gospel of repentance and reconciliation. They were to subdue the world with love. They were, like Christ, not to do their own will, but the will of Him who sent them; and then the tempter would no longer assail them, and angels would minister to them, and they would be nourished by the bread of God, and be able to feed others with that bread which came down from heaven.

What are the relations of preaching to the Church?

The question is a timely one. If its answer lead away from strict homiletics to a discussion of the nature and foundations of the church, its important bearing upon preaching and upon the minister's whole work will be perceived at once. The minister is connected with a system, and the present is a period of notable neglect of systems and institutions. It is a marked feature of the time that it seeks the substance beneath the form; that it cares little for professions, and looks to the spirit and life of whatever challenges its regard. To appearance it is not a believing age; it is full of doubts; and

without regretting this, let us have faith that good surely will come out from the clash of opinions, and that the questioning and restless state of things will be only transitional to something higher and better. But while we love the spiritual truth, and while Christian faith is an inward life and "the kingdom of God is not in word but in power," yet in this age's disregard of the form and its desire to come at the life-principle, is it not in danger of breaking that simple form, that beautiful and essential body in which God has enshrined truth? Is it not in danger of becoming so inward that it shall withdraw from the sphere of the actual, and lose itself in the depths of an intellectual spiritualism? It is good, now and then, in spite of fears we may justly have of formalism and ritualism, to look at the other side, and to speak of the outward things which are not often treated of, but which, properly regarded, are instruments of religious discipline and growth, — such as public worship, Christian nurture and membership, religious ordinances and sacraments, and the church itself, which comprehends them all. Church professions and obligations — outward things — are often held to be of no special value; and they are dissolved in this fine alchemy of speculative thought that we all love, so that there is a vast deal of practical "come-outerism" which is really injurious to the cause of Christ and men's best interests. Preachers preach almost in vain when this is so. And this, too, does not always spring from a real humility, a genuine feeling of unworthiness, such as is manifested in some of the most rare and lovely characters we see among us, but from thoughtless disregard of and

proud feeling of superiority to Christ's words. Now, undoubtedly it is true that he that believeth shall be saved; but yet it is written: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." I suppose the meaning of these words to be this, that though faith is the essential thing for salvation, baptism was instituted as the mode of formally entering upon that new life of faith which was to be proclaimed by the apostles and preachers of the gospel, — as that outward act, that consecrating rite, by which the faith of Christ was to be confessed before men. Soon after these words of our Lord were spoken, on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand souls were awakened by Peter's preaching, he said to them, in answer to their question, "What shall we do?" "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Would it seem from this that baptism was regarded as an unimportant thing by the apostle Peter; and was not in fact the fullest gift of the Holy Spirit, the gift of spiritual power, made to follow upon the baptism of the penitent believer, as being the appointed way of investing him with the new faith, and incorporating him into the visible body of Christ? And this would apply to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which was also established by Christ among the last things for the perpetual observance of his church.

The Puritan, in his desire to bring the truth home to the individual heart, and to do away with a human mediatorship, almost lost sight of the idea of the church. At all events, other Reformed churches of Europe — of

France, Germany, and Switzerland — have always held more strongly to the church-idea, and have built themselves more upon it than have the Puritans of England and America; but whichever is right, no Protestant, or, much more, Christian, will deny that a visible church, representing the company of believers and the kingdom of God on earth, was instituted; and that through its ordinances, word, ministry, and loving service of the Master in carrying out his purpose to save man, it bears some essential relation to the spiritual recovery of our race. The more the world goes on in religious advancement, the more exactly identical will the visible and invisible church grow; for the church is mother of us all who are "baptized into Christ;" and the fast prevailing opinion that a man may choose to remain out of the pale of the church and be a church to himself, is unscriptural, — for none can secede from the common faith, altar, and table, and still be obedient to the Lord's words. "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

I look upon the visible church as in one sense a divine institution, and in another sense as a human institution sanctioned and blessed by God, and rendered the vehicle of His grace so far as it is a true instrument of the conservation and propagation of Christian faith. When it loses this character it ceases to be a true church. I can see no reason to conceive that it was supernaturally ordained in all its detail, — that it is not in this respect now radically different from its Jewish predecessor. I doubt not it was full of human error from the first, the apostles themselves repressing but not extirpating all false notions of doctrine and life; but I imagine

that the true church, as a spiritual power co-ordinate with the Word and the Spirit, is realized through a visible system of organization and ordinances, which, however, is by no means confined to any particular churchly organization; but so far as any one answers its great end better than another, so far it is a more divine organ of the Spirit. Each church, as we familiarly call it, contains some element of truth, and gives it a fuller expression than any other; but while the true church is thus exclusively identified with no particular church or sect, yet the one church of Christ, with its divine word and ordinances, has its place, instrumentally, in the economy of salvation, and no man, however good or great, can afford to neglect it.

Before going further, let me say that preaching derives an apostolic power and permanent enthusiasm from this truth of the unity of the church, infinitely more so than from any sectarian view. It gains a lofty, even divine vantage-ground. It speaks as one with the spirit of God's kingdom that cannot be divided, and as with His voice. The preacher is clothed with a heavenly authority when he preaches not as the messenger of a church (perhaps in some obscure city street), but of the church of Christ. Let me dwell upon this. The best minds, discerning the original unity of plan in men's natures, have yearned for a religious unification of the race. The longings for the "City of God" have been transferred by great and devout minds to a future state, only because it seemed impossible that there should be even an approximate realization of this high and joyful truth on earth. Roman Catholicism, from an inherent error

in its theory, has not succeeded in its attempt to carry out the idea of a universal church; but this ill success by no means proves that the idea is not philosophical, is not one true in the nature of things, is not Scriptural and realizable. As sure as men, made of one blood, shall at length be united in a broad political brotherhood or confederation of states, if called by different names, recognizing the equal rights of each nation and each man before the law, and binding themselves to mutual acts and responsibilities for each other's welfare, — a republic of God, — so there shall be a like union in religion, a world-church comprehending the race, one holy Catholic Church, whose members are members one of another, recognizing each other in every right, sympathy, duty, and responsibility, and bound together by one spirit. The church of the first disciples was the "one body" of Christ. "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ; for by one spirit we are all baptized into one body." There was a true corporate union existing among all the various members of Christ's body, the church, — not merely a spiritual, but an organic, union. This union embraced all believers, and was as wide as the world. Neander speaks thus of the apostolic church: "But this consciousness of the divine life received from Christ is necessarily followed by the recognition of a communion which embraces all mankind, and passes beyond the boundaries of earthly existence; the consciousness of the Holy Spirit as the spirit producing and animating this communion; the consciousness of the unity of

the divine life shared by all believers, — a unity which counterbalances all other differences existing among mankind, — as had been already manifested at the first promulgation of Christianity, when the most marked contrarieties arising from religion, national peculiarities, or mental culture, were reconciled, and the persons whom they had kept at a distance from each other became united in vital communion." And again he says: "This is no abstract representation, but a truly living reality. If in all the widely spread Christian communities, amid all the diversity of human peculiarities animated by the same spirit, only the consciousness of this higher unity and communion were retained, as St. Paul desired, this would be the most glorious appearing of the one Christian church in which the kingdom of God represents itself on earth; and no outward constitution, no system of episcopacy, no council, still less any organization by the State, which would substitute something foreign to its nature, could render the idea of the Christian church more real or concrete."

To bring this idea of the one apostolic and universal church into something like a definite statement, I would say, that he who studies with unprejudiced mind the account of the planting of the primitive church, freeing his mind from the influence of subsequent historical development and following the New Testament, must come to the conclusion that, during the life of the apostles, who, under Christ established the constitution of the church, the Christian church was formed of various communities of believers, in and out of Jerusalem, and also in cities and nations other than Jewish, who, though

differentiated, still held together as members of one organism, with recognized relations to each other, and with mutual duties and responsibilities arising from such a corporate union. They were one body. The apostles never thought of anything else. Christ was not divided. The doings of the church in Antioch were a common and serious concern of the church in Jerusalem. A man was a member of the church of Christ rather than the church of Jerusalem. The church at Jerusalem was only one of the doors, or inlets, by which he entered into the temple and kingdom of Christ. This kingdom was world-wide; this church was a universal church. It was a greater idea than that of the Roman empire. An idea like that fired the hearts of the first preachers to go forth to the conquest of the whole world for Christ, and because we have lost this great idea we have grown cold in our zeal for the world's redemption. We demur about sending a missionary to the heathen whose heart is glowing with the love of Christ and ready to shed its life-blood in his service, if his head may have at any time indulged a theological speculation in regard to the future. The one is positive, the other negative. The one is the impelling power, the other the philosophic thought. Not so did the primitive church act. It would never have accomplished what it did if it had so acted. The Peters and Thomases, and those who followed Christ, and those who followed not with these but by faith cast out devils in his name, were welcomed by him in the work of preaching the gospel, as one in the spirit, love, and headship of Christ. The preacher to the heathen must be inspired with the consciousness of his own liv-

ing union and the church's living union with Christ, and then he has the powers of the eternal world behind him, and he goes forth in "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." And so of every preacher in every pulpit at home. The growing tendency to denominationalism at the West, is not so good a sign as the opposite and nobler tendency to unity, for the great purposes of preaching.

I have been speaking upon the influence of the truth of the unity of the Church, as related to the power of the preacher; that his message gained by this truth proportionally in impetus and authority, as the voice of a whole nation uttered through its representative is weightier than that of an individual man. In unity is strength. In the apostolic Church there was this unity though in diversity; but the diversity was as nothing to the unity, since the diversity was human and the unity divine. Even in the apostles' time differences existed between the Jewish and Hellenic churches; but these did not break the union, they did not divide the body of Christ. True brotherhood, communion, equality, sympathy, the reciprocal reference of difficulties, the acknowledgment of mutual responsibility and help, the recognition of Christ's true ministers and preachers, continued unbroken. It was a real and organic union, whereas with us it is an ideal and theoretic union. But here was a type of the Christian Church absolutely realized. From this divine type, received fresh from the hands of Christ, — from this perfect and glorious body of Christ, which shone before the eyes of the first disciples in simple but resplendent beauty, — the church soon departed.

It could not sustain the unity in its purity, and therefore its message, its preaching became weak. It fell away from the Head, and thus also the body was broken into many irreconcilable parts and schisms. To this apostolic unity, if we wish the Church to speak as with one voice, and with power, we must return, keeping it ever in view as a stimulating aim.

In the first place, no national or denominational church is spoken of in the New Testament. There is no "church of Asia," or "church of Europe;" no "Greek church," or "Latin church." There are churches of Asia and of Macedonia, but there is not even the church of a city. Spoken of exclusively as such, it is the "church at Jerusalem," the "church at Ephesus," the community of believers who are collected in a certain city, by which local or geographical name it is most conveniently designated. The writers of the New Testament give no authority to the view that the church of Christ is narrowed down or applied to a nation, a province, a city, a denomination. "For while one saith, 'I am of Paul;' and another, 'I am of Apollos;' are ye not carnal? Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Can we doubt that the same apostolic rebuke applies in its spirit to that denominationalism — in so far as it is divisive and built upon human foundation — which is expressed in the name of Lutheran, Calvinistic, Wesleyan, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Baptist, Congregationalist, whether the name sprang from a minister, an office, a rite, or a polity? Who can doubt that

the war-names of Roman Catholic and Protestant lie under the same apostolic censure, and that when the church returns to the pure types set by Christ and his apostles, they will vanish away?

The word "church," unless I am greatly in error, applies —

1. To all true believers who have ever existed, who compose the whole body of Christ, — "the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven."

2. To all Christ-confessing disciples of whatever name or race on earth, — there is no "colour-line" here, — the whole visible church of Christ, as in the passages: "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved;" "Give none offence, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God."

3. To every distinct community, assembly, or even household of Christian believers gathered together for the purpose of religious worship and service in any given place, as "The church which was in Jerusalem," "The church which is in his house."

These three instances cover the use of the word in the New Testament. The more comprehensive use evidently originates and modifies the more restricted uses. First the one, then the many. The term represents the real body of Christ, either as a universal whole, or as an integral part and member of this whole. The arm is not the body, but we call it our body. The member of the body of Christ which was represented by the church at Antioch, was still one with the body of which Christ was the Head. It represented a variety in unity. It expressed a living

union, not life isolated and independent, but life springing from and nourished by the one common service, — "for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body."

Roman Catholicism has failed to realize the unity of the church. In the lines of hierarchical church government, by labouring to bring about an external uniformity in organization and rule founded upon a *jure divino* assumption, the problem cannot be solved. The dominion that Innocent III. laid upon the whole world and all its powers has been growing less and less, and that arrogated ecclesiastical unity, or universality, which is vitiated by the fact that an earthly head is put in place of the spiritual head, has been passing slowly off the surface of the world like a cloud, nation after nation emerging into the light of a clearer faith. I do not say this in hostility to the Roman Church, or in denial of its claims to being historically and essentially a Christian church, though bound to great errors; but I say it has failed to represent the apostolic idea of one universal church. I honour even the falsified but majestic shadow of this idea which Catholicism has held up, and which has given force to its preaching and utterances; and, perhaps, it will be her mission, when purified of the Papacy and other "adulterating ingredients," as Coleridge calls them, to teach us this lesson.

Not to dwell longer upon the unity of the church, I would only add that one practical obstacle in the way to this true unity would be removed, when the equal rights of all Christian churches should be mutually acknowledged. A true church of Christ, whatever its name, ought to be regarded as entitled to all rights and priv-

ileges that belong to a true member of the body of Christ. Its ministers, regularly ordained and accredited, whether called bishops, priests, or simply ministers and pastors, should be recognized by other churches as ministers of the church of Christ, especially since ordination does not derive its prime validity from the act of man, but the appointment of Christ. Its members, under due tests and restrictions, should be entitled to the privileges of full communion and fellowship in other churches. There might be, at first, practical difficulties in the way of carrying out this mode of inter-ecclesiastical action and communion, of worship and work; but the difficulties would grow less and less as the churches became more pure, more spiritual, more filled with the devotion and love of the gospel. Then preaching would be apostolic in its range and power. It would flash forth as from the cloudy oracle of God's own dwelling. Then we might expect great preachers, with a world-message, and with Christlike souls that could take in the world. Then they would not preach merely as individual men, but as God's messengers. Then the old saying would become true, that a preacher is not to be heeded till his feet stood above the earth. He would not at least stand in the cramped pulpit of a sectarian division of the church, but would breathe a freer atmosphere.

To return to the necessity of a visible church in the world. Because Christ founded it, as we have seen, that is enough; but we ourselves may see its necessity and beauty from the fact that the church is the expression of faith, in the world. We may conceive of a great thought lying in a man's mind and useful there, in so far as it

serves to expel a base thought; but is the thought capable of accomplishing the good it is fitted to accomplish until it express itself in some word or act, some form of beauty or power? Had Michael Angelo's conception of the dome of St. Peter's, as the Pantheon hung in air, never been wrought in stone, would it have moved men? Would the creative power of God have been a source of blessedness unless He had put it forth in creation? Would the invisible God have been made known unless He had manifested Himself in the Son, who is the power of God unto our salvation? There must be an objective form for the faith which men have grasped in their spiritual consciousness. The Spirit must organize itself into a body fitted for it; and this is one work of the preacher, to be constantly setting forth the faith for men's baptism into it, and their embodiment of its life into their life.

Again, the church is the means of concentrating and diffusing the gifts of the Spirit; for although the Divine Spirit is immanent in universal humanity, and God is never absent from any of His creatures, yet His gracious influences, we are led to believe, may not be poured out so freely on an unreceptive and unconfessing world. His pure gift would thereby be dishonoured, even quenched. There must be a fit medium, depositary, receptacle of these spiritual impartations, a perennial spring in the hills, supplied from above, from which they can flow over the world and make it God's garden. This is the church, or that humanity which is purified by faith, obedient to the will of God, united to Him in love like that of His Son, and thus prepared for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

In the church there is this opening into the heavenly and divine. There is a free and filial intercourse with the Father and the peaceful inflow of His love and life. The Holy Spirit perpetually broods over the earthly and imperfect but regenerated church, bringing its chaotic elements into heavenly order and harmony, and working out a new creation; "truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son." The preachers of this true church preach "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," — that the church's faith "should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Once more, the church forms the witness for the truth in the world. The church represents the Word in its living purity, grace and power. Who would have preserved even the revealed word in its integrity, had there been no church to hand it down from age to age? The written record would have disappeared like the lost books of Livy; or, as containing a reproving and condemnatory word to the evil there is in the world, would have been buried out of sight and thought of men deeper than did ever plummet sound; and, more than this, How would the faith, which comes through the inward reception of Christ, have been perpetuated in men's souls without a living church in whom he makes his light to shine upon the darkness of nature? God sometimes leaves, as it were, a local or a national church, which has abandoned itself and become formalized, materialized, or rationalized (I do not mean in the sense of denying reason its place in faith), and then we see how suddenly faith leaves a people. The golden candlesticks of the Seven Churches

of Asia were removed, and where has gone the apostolic faith which burned on them? Where the church is in its purity, there the truth is in its purity and divine power, for God has chosen to make His church "the pillar and ground of the truth." There is unwonted strife as to doctrines of Christian faith pervading the literature, the society, the theological schools, and the pulpits of the day. But there is one significant fact which may serve to assure minds and give them peace, and that is that there is a divine care of the truth; that the truth is kept pure by a higher superintendence; that proceeding from one eternal Spirit it has an eternal unity, which is to be found in its integrity somewhere in the church, which is the body of Christ. Divine truth does not depend for its life on men, or ministers, or theological schools, or councils, or human forms of thinking, or philosophy, though these have their uses; but it is sown by the Spirit of God in the believing, loving, suffering, and obedient minds who compose the true church; and this has ever been so. This Christian consciousness guided and moulded by the Divine Spirit through all changes and modifications; this essential righteousness, faith, and love of the gospel, — perhaps conserved in the humblest, certainly the humblest and truest, whether simple or noble, unlettered or cultured, — is identical with the apostolic faith once delivered to the saints. And this truth, this gospel of the kingdom, shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony.

I was speaking of the witness of the church to the truth, and that Christ laid on the church the work of "holding forth the word of life," so that in the beginning, "all as soon as they received Christ went forth

everywhere preaching the word." And this work of testimony was never more needed than at present, for never was the doctrine of pessimism more practically taught than now; when disgust of godly living has set in, and it is openly proclaimed that "life is evil," and that happiness in any form has never been and never will be obtained, either by the individual man or by the world as a whole; so that the preaching of a living God, who through the Son has awakened humanity by His touch and brought a new eternal hope into man's life, the preaching of the word of life is the thing required for the present day, while it is the only salvation to men, and this divine gift the church bears in its hand to the world. The church represents the great idea of hope to the race, and is a body organized for the more effective preaching of the truth that makes alive. Is the church doing this? Is every believer, every church-member, a preacher of eternal hope and life?

Lastly, the church forms a family wherein the believer, at first weak as a little child in the faith, is nourished in the new life, kept safe from the deadly corruptions of the world, and trained to cheerful activity in God's service.

Christian faith enters as an independent force into this earthly sphere of things, and it cannot claim to be an exclusive and absolute power; it cannot, as yet, authoritatively demand the entire control of all human affairs, society, and civilization. It comes as a modifying and renovating element into society, and must work its own way along with other forces until by its inherent truth and divine power it wins for itself a dominant place. Thus it has been said, Christ commanded his disciples

to give tribute to Cæsar, but Christianity has destroyed Cæsarism. The New Testament, in like manner, urges a brotherly treatment of the slave, but Christianity has destroyed slavery itself. Every existent wrong has its destruction in the law of love. Yet in the mean time, in this undeveloped and struggling period of the Christian faith, the church presents in itself a social sphere, a family organization, which is intended for the genial and kindly nurture of the new life that comes from above. Here is a household of faith. Here is a brotherhood whose unifying principle is love, and whose unison is compared to that which exists among parts of one body, which are not similar bodies brought together, but one interdependent body, animated by a common principle of life, working from one centre. In the world there are as many centres as there are men ; in the church there is but one centre, the one divine man, the embodied humanity, — Christ. The New Testament test of a man's being a Christian is the love of the brethren, and he who breaks the love by false acts is a " murderer." The sin of the Pharisees was that they broke the law of love, the law of brotherhood. They were separatists, sectarians, schismatics. In the religious conflicts of the past, in those spiritual wars since the beginning of the Christian era which have divided the nations and gone like a sword through human household's hearts, it has been heretofore thought essential to urge the spirit of separation from the corruptions of the church and of the world ; but the root-ideas of the gospel are peace through purification, the reconciliation of divided wills, the harmonizing power of love ; and the time will come when there shall be

union and not separation, and when those who love the Lord shall, in obedience to his express command, "love one another," and shall re-knit the bleeding parts of his broken body. Did the Lord mean that his great words, "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us," should not be realized, as some sect-makers say, on earth, but only in heaven? If everything good is relegated to heaven, what becomes of this world? This is a sorry prospect. The better view is that Christians of every name, being united in one family in Christ, their Head, shall also unite themselves together in good works of Christian activity, shall help and train each other in doing good and redeeming men from the power of evil; and then, thus united, and then alone, shall the Church be stronger than the world.

Now, to be baptized and to become a member of this church of Christ requires but the simplest act of faith, the truly childlike spirit that trusts Christ, the spirit of the Ethiopian ruler whom Philip received by baptism into the fellowship of the church on the reception of Christ into his heart. He had come up from the depths of Africa to enter at once into the Christian church, and yet he went on his way rejoicing, having done according to his light, having not been disobedient to the heavenly vision. Now, if the church, established by Christ for the confession of his faith, for the concentrating and diffusing of the Holy Spirit's influences, for the preaching of the truth and the training of men in holy love and service, was divinely planned to aid in the world's redemption, how evidently this plan is made vain by the

fact that such large numbers of souls are living, at best, but a feeble and precarious spiritual life outside of the church, in the chill atmosphere of the world. The brotherhood of the Christian church is not yet so strong as to be above all other bonds. The roll of church members is poor and scant. This is a condition of things to cause profound and painful thought. The church fails to lay its grasp on the passing generations. It fails to lay hold of and utilize some of the most powerful intellects in the community. The loftiest and the lowest are not brought in, and only a fraction of the middle class. There are vast multitudes, not only of the unevangelized and heathenized, but of young persons who have been reared in enlightened and Christianly ways, and who, perhaps, are not themselves strangers to the Heavenly Father's love, who are not yet in the church and doing its work, but are drifting hopelessly farther and farther away from it. This is wrong and unscriptural: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." How long, indeed, shall it be said of a great many among us whom we respect, that "they had every other gift but wanted love?" He who loves Christ will show that love by confession. The two go together by a law as sure as that which unites filial love and filial obedience.

And have ministers no responsibility here? It is to ask this that I have dwelt so long upon the question of the church. The relation of the preacher to the church springs from the nature of the preacher's work, which is mainly spiritual, dealing with men's moral life and char-

acter. It is not in his own strength alone. He has something behind him. The church is the preacher's coign of vantage, his wise economy of effort, his divinely established help and instrument whereby to reach and mould the souls of men for God. He derives moral power from the church to send forth the messages of God into the world, and, in turn, he has a special duty to the church to keep it full-manned and strong. Ministers are servants of the church, appointed for the church's care and growth. They are the door-keepers of the Lord's house, and bound to keep that door open and free. They are (to change the figure) the church's voice. They are to admonish, proclaim, call, invite, and urge all to come in. Their preaching should be winning, drawing, wide-reaching. The apostles so preached that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." But "adding to the church" seems to have become a subordinate thing; not that ministers and preachers are less true and strenuous labourers now than before, but as labourers in the "Lord's vineyard" — the church — they have apparently less personal aim and solicitude than formerly. They are contented with the general moral influence of their preaching upon men, but do not (so it has impressed me, though I may be wrong) bend such determined efforts to bring men into the church, by whose fostering care they are to be trained in all spiritual virtue and holiness; so that the church now threatens to assume the hierarchical conception of it, as consisting of the clergy and a small body of ecclesiastics, male and female. Do not recent statistics bear out this? This is indeed, I grant, quite in

keeping with other tendencies of the day, which, good in themselves, are nevertheless influential in narrowing the activities of the church and placing it in a secondary rank, though without the design of doing so. I appreciate, for instance, the grand work that the Young Men's Christian Association has done in the land, making up the glaring deficiencies of the church; but I do not yield for a moment the principle that the church should be strong and large-hearted enough to retain within itself every energy which is developed in its day, and to make use of for good ends all kinds of talent belonging to every age of life. But young men do not drop into the net; they must be captured by the patient skill of wise fishers of men. Where, indeed, are the young men in the church? Where and upon what objects do they devote their energies? And if otherwise directed, what an immense loss to the church of Christ does this imply, since the great and bold things in the world are almost invariably done by young men. Our churches should be full, and, above all, of young men, who do not see impossibilities and are stimulated by difficulties. While gladly welcoming and lending a hand to true reforms from without, ministers should stir up within themselves a holy jealousy for the church, that all beneficent activities, all reformatory, social, and missionary movements of aggression upon evil in the world, should find their inspiration and place in the church. Preachers should present the church to the world as fitted for every good ambition, with its sweep so ample, its communion so free, its creed so liberal, its life so pure and holy, its power so divine, and its love so infinite that no

soul need remain shrunken and famished outside of it, and the extent of the brotherhood of the church should be conterminous with the extent of the brotherhood of man.

Is the reward promised in the text — "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. xii. 3) — only for those who do actually accomplish the conversion of many persons, and not also for those who have intense ambition and are truly consecrated, but whose circumstances absolutely prevent any work except on a limited scale?

The question of my correspondent is one of modern Christian belief and experience applied to a very ancient word of prophecy; but it is a legitimate question and true in its idea; for the Book of Daniel sets forth the real conflict between the powers of the world and the kingdom of God. It is not essential, although a question of interest, whether the four kingdoms of Daniel's prophecy were the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greek and the Roman, or that the last of these was the kingdom of Antiochus Epiphanes, instead of the Roman; but in this 12th chapter of the book, all scholars agree that, beyond the cycle of the world-kingdoms, there is a future cycle spoken of, which looks to the triumph of another and a spiritual kingdom of righteousness, — a Messianic kingdom, — that, while suffering persecution from the power of the world, as it did in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, and also of the Roman Emperors, will finally emerge and shine. Then, also, the "wise," or those who have taught the true knowledge of God,

and have "turned many to righteousness," or have maintained and confirmed the truth and led others to do the same, even if their own lives have been sacrificed, "shall shine as the stars forever and ever," or be as the clear welkin fixed in permanent brightness and glory. This language applies, certainly, in the main, to leaders who, like Daniel himself, have been loyal to God and the right in dark times of the world's religious history, but also in its scope to all those who, by their lives and words, have preached righteousness, and have thus aided many to be righteous; and who can tell but that when all things shall be revealed, some who are now unknown, shrouded in their self-sacrifice and lost in their love to God and man, shall then shine as planets beside which the most illustrious names in the history of the church shall pale. But the highest motive to labour for the good and salvation of men, the highest motive of ministers and preachers of the gospel, is, not the hope of future reward, but the simple doing of the divine will, the love of God and of man.

Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. — John i. 13.

Text contains Bible doctrine of regeneration. God's plan of delivering sinners from the malady of sin. Taught, first, negatively; second, positively. First, what it is not; second, what it is.

I. Negatively.

1. "Not of blood," — natural generation — plan of evolution — "survival of the fittest." According to this the Jews said, "We have Abraham to our father." Great privilege to be of good family, — to be born of pious parents. But regeneration not in this way. All born sinners.

2. "Nor of the will of the flesh." The body possesses power of shaking off disease, or of healing its own maladies — "the vis medicatrix naturae" — recuperative power of nature. May not the soul possess a like power? Many think so. Idea embodied in proverb, "He is sowing his wild oats." But, alas, none ever gets well of sin.

3 "Nor of the will of man" Either (*a*) of the man himself, or (*b*) of will of others, as parents, teachers, etc. No education or training or discipline will effect regeneration.

Under these three heads is included every plan that men have ever trusted in or tried or that is conceivable.

II. Positively. "But of God."

Prove and enforce.

This plan kindly submitted and having some good points ends where it should have begun. It spends itself on what is not the theme, or what, at best, is but a preparation for it. The potential word of the text is its last word. The way is cleared to this, but here is the substantial and infinite truth of the passage fitted to teach the mind in spiritual things. If the context, which surely cannot be lost sight of in explaining Scripture, were regarded, the subject referred to by the pronoun "which" ("which were born") is what goes before, namely, "children of God." The apostle in the text describes who and what are the children of God. The description given of what they are *not*, — and I venture to suggest that this be made the introduction of the sermon, — sets forth but the one truth, though in a cumulative form, which begins in nature and ends in will, that the children of God are not of human origin by any accident of generation, as fruit of natural desire or result of human purpose. This, as suggested by the plan itself, touches on the strong point made by the

Jews, that they were Abraham's offspring. It may be also legitimately applied to whatever act, intellectual and moral, man can put forth to produce such beings. It may apply to religious zeal itself, whether on the part of other men or of one's own voluntary striving to make himself good and righteous. These human acts are important, and perhaps essential, but they are not the creative cause of the new ethical generation of the "children of God;" and then comes the real theme. Thus the plan might, perhaps, be given somewhat in this shape: —

The "children of God" are not produced by any human means, whether natural or moral. This thought is to be set forth in clear relief, briefly but forcibly, so as to awaken desire to know what is the true nature of that new life so impressively spoken of in the introduction of the Gospel of St. John.

I. Nature of God's children.

1. It is unknown and mysterious. It is like the wind of whose origin no man is cognizant, nor does its source lie within the limits of human will whose operations are explicable; but though unknown it is still definite and according to a divine law of being.

2. It is inner and spiritual. Its law of life is not drawn from anything without or as a development of the natural man, but proceeds from what is within and hidden.

3. It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

II. Signs and characteristics of God's children.

1. All comprehended in love. The traits of the new creature implied in his being "born of God," and as given by the same apostle in many places, and by the

apostle Paul in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, are embraced in one word, — love. As love is the essential nature of God, so it is of His children. This is the infallible criterion. The divine spirit of love, which is the spirit of Christ the Son, is more easily recognized in a man than described; but its absence from a professed child of God is fatal to his sonship. The deepest principle of the new birth is in the affections and divine quality of the heart. Love is the root of true righteousness. When a radical change of character is wrought, love is the effective principle.

2. Joy in things of God. The spiritual life is of the nature of choice in which the law itself is surpassed, and a man acts holily because he delights to do so. He is not impelled so much by the outward command as by the inner inclination, so that the yoke is lifted and the heart acts freely and with joyful willingness.

3, Progress toward perfection. If thus divine, the life of God within the soul must be constantly making advance till, if not here, yet hereafter, it becomes perfect as God Himself is perfect.

Let them learn first to show piety at home. — I. Tim. v. 4.

Introduction — The influence of home. We are, in very large measure, what our home-life makes us. Homes nominally religious, without proper influence, because lacking elements in the true home-life.

I. In my model Christian home, the religion of Christ is lived every day; not simply professed, but lived. The spirit of Christ rules in all the home-life.

II. My model Christian home makes much of the Bible. There the Bible holds the central place, and gets a daily reading clear round the family circle.

III. My model Christian home has a family altar. No Christian home can be complete until the family altar is set up. The heathen has his shrine; shall the Christian have less? The influence of that sacred gathering for prayer lingers with us through all the years of life.

IV. In my model Christian home religion is often made the theme of conversation. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another." No better place for this than in the home. Personal religion is never kept in the background in my model Christian home.

In my model Christian home there is a very high regard for the house of God. The whole family-circle is in the church-circle; all revering God's day and God's house.

This is my model Christian home; the home filled with the inspiration of heaven, and most like unto the home in the Father's house.

If this text be employed for a sermon upon the Christian Home, or Home Piety, as it rightly may be, the exact use of the original passage should at least be stated. It is interesting in itself. Speaking of the duties of those of different ages in the church, the apostle says that widows who have children or grandchildren should depend for support upon their own families, and that children should learn, before they make professions of godliness in other matters, to show its fruits at home and among their own relatives in the honour and support they render to those who are older; that they should make return to their parents for all their kindness and care. The love and respect of children to parents is, indeed, the type of genuine piety, — of the honour and love of God. A sermon might seasonably be preached from this text on the duties of children to parents, — of those deep eternal obligations that devolve upon children from the Chris-

tian motive of love, such as God bestows upon us in His Son.

In the plan presented, I should, in the introduction, add to what is well said, the statement in regard to the original bearings of the text, as has been suggested.

What is the law of truth in its relativity to the human mind, which the preacher should understand in order to preach successfully for the conversion and spiritual upbuilding of men?

The answer to this question would, indeed, conduct us into a style of homiletics unlike the commonly understood science of sermonizing, but it would go to the root of the matter, and comprehend the object of preaching, which is to lead men to know and love God unto eternal life, which is Pauline homiletics; and is it not, above all, the homiletics of Christ, our example as a preacher? He cared for the substance rather than the mode of preaching; for the actual bringing of selfish and sinful men back to the holy will of the Father. This is seen in one of his pregnant utterances, made while he preached daily to the people. These special words of Christ, whose truth as a teacher, in opposition to false teachers, was proved by his own test, namely, that he sought not his own glory, but the glory of Him that sent him, were: "*If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.*" The "doctrine" evidently refers to truth which is not merely intellectual or superficial, like the knowledge of natural things, but spiritual, and has relations to the apprehensions and affections of the soul, — to those relations of

the human spirit to the doctrine wherein God is known in His true being as Father and Redeemer. "If any man *will* do His will," if his heart's desire springs toward doing the will of God, if, from the impulse of a willing, loving, obedient heart, he turns to the doing of God's will, he shall be led to the saving knowledge of God. This is, in fact, similar to the words of the apostle John in his first epistle, "He that loveth is born of God and knoweth God;" and it does not essentially differ in meaning from those other words of our Lord, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" which mean that the state of the heart purely seeking holy things shall so put to rest evil passions that the blessed vision of God shall rise upon the soul.

We might then affirm that our true knowledge of God — the end of teaching — depends upon the state of the heart, the sincere and obedient condition of the heart toward God. It does not consist so much, I take it, in the doing of God's will outwardly or perfectly (though this is an inevitable result of the right state of the heart), as in the willingness to do it, in the disposition. This is very important in practical religion. It is a well-known principle that like comprehends like. Truth cannot be comprehended without a preparation of the mind that brings it into unity with the truth, since "the faculty of knowing does not act in isolation, but man's capacity for knowledge is conditioned upon his inclination." As we do not graft a tree until the season when the old stock is ready to receive into its pores by numberless ascending currents the new life principle, so we do not, if we understand human nature, attempt to impart truth or

true counsel to another, let him be our best friend or child, at the first opportunity which offers, whatever may be the state of the mind, whether excited by enjoyment or raging with anger; but we wait for a moment when the feelings are tranquil, when the heart is disturbed by no absorbing emotion, and is pliant, affectionate, and confiding; then every word sinks and is lodged in the mind. Thus truth cannot be looked upon by itself, or taken out of its relations to the object on which it acts; it is always more or less affected by the object on which it acts, — an important consideration for the preacher.

A great many mistakes and unsuccessful efforts in religious teaching, which come under the rhetorical principle of adaptation, might have been avoided, had this fact been duly appreciated. Truth, however long and faithfully preached, does not convert men in spite of the state of their hearts, any more (as our Lord used the sacredly familiar figure) than seed sown on a rock or on the sandy path produces fruit. "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Here is the joint operation of two factors, — the Word, and the soul on which it acts; and, in this case, the unprofitable hearers, as in the parable of the sower, "had no root in themselves," and therefore the very seed of God's truth withered. In the acquisition of scientific truth there is something analogous. A student obtains outside views of natural truth by receiving it second-hand from text-books, or on authority; but he alone truly knows a truth who is taught by it, who waits on its teachings, who enters into its spirit, who

submits himself to its requirements and to the ruling will it embodies, — who, in a word, investigates patiently and lovingly for himself the laws of Nature.

What scientific man is there who has come into any interior and original knowledge of natural truth who has not done this by a faithful obedience to Nature, not seeking his own truth, his own theory, or glory, or will, but Nature's will, — by watching, as Agassiz did for many winter months on the desolate Aar-glacier, for her slightest indications, and walking carefully in the narrow way she dictates, — since there is "a strait and narrow way" into the kingdom of science as into the kingdom of heaven, and he only who carefully follows that way may enter the kingdom. Great artists, too, lend themselves with most devoted patience to all Nature's appointments. "Nature is commanded by obeying her," Lord Bacon said; and another great Englishman wrote, "Humility is the hall-mark of wisdom." In the search for divine truth, above all, this principle cannot be lost sight of, for it is not seeking one's own glory, or doing one's own will, or following one's moral or religious theories, but it is by a practical submission to truth which expresses or embodies the will of God, that one comes to know its power, sweetness, and soul-renewing nature.

How often is it the case with the Christian's heart, sincerely striving to know more of God, that it learns more in an hour, or half-hour, by an act of love, of obedience, of doing good, of self-denial hard though it be, than in years of thought and study, noble auxiliary as thought is to truth; that to the mind humbly waiting upon God and serving Him, the difficulties which beset

Christian doctrine will gradually disappear, or continue to be no longer a means of discouragement, because the mind has learned to wait God's time and method of making it clear. Without setting all down to mystery, there are difficulties in the higher truth, as there must be when the inconceivable nature of God is the subject of truth, just as there remain mountain peaks not yet scaled. Whether these are unscalable or not, it is true of the summits of the Divine nature that they are not attained by the human mind; they are inaccessible; and if they are ever distantly approached, it is by this law of relativity, and by the Spirit-uplifting influence within that portion of the soul which has capacities of love and faith, which can apprehend divine things, and to which the Father communicates Himself in love.

Take the first and simplest of truths, the being of God; students of theistic evidences know that God's existence cannot be proved by the pure reason; nor can the related truth of the immortality of the soul. The argument is strong, but not perfect. But since there is the consciousness of dependence; since there is need of the divine in the human soul; since man, philosophically, is incomplete without God; since the soul cannot be bounded or satisfied by rationalistic proof; since it can and must exercise loving faith in what meets its wants in the Word and Spirit of God, — especially in the revelation of a Redeemer, — then, although Christian faith is an intelligent act, the most rational act of the soul, venturing nobly upon its best conclusions and the greatest probability or weight of moral evidence; yet to know these truths requires something more than an act of intel-

ligence; it is an act of the soul in sympathy with the higher impulses and attractions of the love of God. It looks for light to the actual revelation which Christ makes to it of the Father, and of all that cluster of spiritual truths about the truth of God's being. Here, then, if we wish to grow in grace and the knowledge of God, we must come by faith and penitent obedience constantly to drink, — so that it may be in us a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. This thought might be followed out in a more practical manner as regards the preacher's spiritual work.

I have treated of the law of relativity in regard to the knowledge of divine truth as being dependent upon the state of the heart in its willingness to do the will of God, and going beyond the bounds of rationalistic proof, and this is of the utmost importance for the preacher to understand. Now, we might, by parity of reasoning, affirm that he who, on the contrary, scornfully or carelessly reverses the process, and strives to comprehend before he obeys, to know the truth before he does the will, can never come to the knowledge of divine things; for he who is seeking God, never having said, "Lord, teach me," is cutting and wounding himself with the mysteries of God, not having obeyed those plain requirements of His will which he can by his moral instinct comprehend. Religious truth being thus full of the instant, intimate, and vital claims of God upon us, being full of the heart and spirit of God, being addressed not only to the intellectual, but above all and supremely to the moral nature, and being affiliated with our personal responsibility, — our deepest spiritual being and affection, our own hearty

obedience of the truth becomes the only way to know it, — the way to that real knowledge of truth which vivifies and saves the soul. The preacher should bring home the question to his hearers: "Are you willing to begin the service of God?" This question settled leads to all other things in knowledge and faith. It is to be reasonably presumed that in ordinary congregations there are some persons who, if not converted men, are not without thought upon their religious responsibility, and who, at some time in their lives, have made an effort, perhaps a strong effort, to obtain the true knowledge of God and that peace which flows from the assurance of His love. The lonely room has hid these struggles. The silent heart has been tossed with them as with waves of the sea. The hour of affliction and heavy disappointment has emphasized them with terrible power. In the necessities of the mind that penetrates the reason of things, "thoughts that wander through eternity" have been aroused. What is life? What is the end of this restless existence? The cry of the uselessness of all, the "eternal misery of life," will not answer these questions. As the consciousness of wrongdoing, of sin, has mingled with such reflections like a cloud that rolls menacingly over the clear sky of contemplation, shutting out the light, the mind has lost itself in thinking, in interminable questions, and has come back from such search unsatisfied, despairing of light, without peace or even hope, and getting no nearer to God and the rest of His love. Thought, every good preacher and pastor knows, is among the first signs of an awakened condition of the mind at last drawn to give an attention to spiritual realities, and

which it would be sheer fanaticism to overlook, as if we could leave out the intellectual nature in this universal awakening of being, such as a true, religious conversion is; yet it is not, after all, by the way of the intellect that one comes into the peace of a child who finds rest on the bosom of its Heavenly Father. It is only by the way of love and obedience; for in matters that pertain to the spiritual kingdom the heart goes before the head, and love outstrips the swift reason. In God's dealings with human minds this truth has been illustrated. The patriarch Job recognized the same law when he humbled himself before Him who searches the reins and heart. David, by awful humiliations and chastisements, was brought to sing: "Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in the truth and teach me; the meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach his way." The disciple who, by loving, had learned to know the divinity of Christ and truth as it is in Jesus, wrote: "Every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God." The Lord said in the Sermon on the Mount, in which the kingdom of God in its majestic breadth and beauty is unrolled before us: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And he said in another place: "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

A German author, poetically but no less truly, writes of this process of moral life through that humility which fits the mind for the reception of divine truth: "It is a fruit which is found in the field of spiritual poverty, — a flower that grows from the ashes of self-love;" for, when

a man acknowledges his want, comes to the death of self, and at the same time feels and acknowledges the all-gracious, all-completing, all-satisfying love of God, then his heart is teachable, is softened to receive the seed of eternal life. How else could he receive it? How else could rich and poor, high and low, receive the gospel? In what other way could there be hope for all sorts of men in every state of life and intelligence, for those who have no intellectual training, to be brought to the saving knowledge of the truth? Could they come by the way of reasoning? This, after all, partakes of the pride of the intellect, Yet even the most rude, simple, and sinful man, under true spiritual influences, may evolve this *willingness* of which the Saviour spoke in words of divinely practical moment and help when he said: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Here the θέλειν means true desire. Our King James' Version does not give us its precise meaning; and the new Revised Version even would be apt to lead us into error, because its rendering of the passage — "if any man willeth to do his will" — might give the impression that θέλειν implies a deliberate act of will, or choice, whereas it is willingness more than will. It is disposition rather than volition. Actions which result from the will are altogether in a man's own power. They are acts of conscious volition, and have their origin within ourselves. Will is to be distinguished from willing disposition, or desire, for desire may originate from objects out of ourselves and over which we have often no controul. Now, if θέλειν here be not a dry act of will springing from the reason or intellectual nature merely,

and consciously taken as a deliberate act of choice, but is a true desire only to do God's will, springing from the affections or whatever other source, a sincere yearning of the heart to God, the smoking flax, the inward acknowledged desire of the spirit toward a higher obedience and life, however small, and in one however sinful, wrought, we hardly know how, by the Spirit of God and the imperceptible spiritual influences of truth upon the heart, which every man, the wickedest man, experiences at times, because he is a man and is a child-spirit dependent upon God the Father of spirits, and is a being capable of loving, obeying, and knowing God, — how possible, how easy for him to be saved! He has but to follow out this thread of light kindled in him, this gracious yearning, coming from whence it may, this penitent wish, this softening desire after better things, this confiding impulse and real willingness of the heart toward God, — to follow it humbly, boldly, persistently, implicitly, like a little child, still trusting in God to guide and lead to perfect light and peace. So was it with the disciple Peter, the untaught fisherman of Galilee, who leaped into the sea to go to his Master, forgetting difficulties, undismayed by impossibilities, looking only to his beloved Lord. And he did not sink, although his faith was fearfully tried and he began to sink. The preacher of Christ's gospel has a right to say to his hearers that any man may be saved who is willing to be saved; and that every one knows this by his own heart-experiences, by being willing to follow out the higher divine leading, rather than the lower, sensual desire.

Then let him be told who is honestly seeking the truth

for his eternal salvation, who is only willing to be saved, that he may and should go fearlessly to the soul's Lord, obeying his simple word to come to Him, even though he must cast himself into a raging sea of long-terrifying difficulties in order to reach Him. "We know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth." The docile, obedient, broken, and trusting heart, Christ will fill with the new light of his truth and life.

It has seemed to me in regard to some men in especial, that "they had every other gift, but wanted love;" that there was nothing lacking to such a man in religious things but that creative touch of God which makes all things new. His condition is like a landscape at night. The hills, the sea, the forests, the plain, the well-built towns and the fertile fields, stretching away half seen or hidden in the obscure light, are all, indeed, there; but all is dim, confused, dark; it requires a touch of the morning's beam to reveal its noble features in their true beauty, fulness, and life. Truth is not absent, knowledge is not wanting; but it is the *heart* that is wrapt in darkness, unbelief, and death. It is the silent, apathetic, impenitent, unloving heart. No slightest impulse of loving desire even! The Spirit of God responding to the least yearning of the heart after His higher teachings, will at once bring light and gladness to the whole internal scenery of the mind. The mind will awake beneath the transforming beam of Christ's love, and where was darkness there will be light, where was only the natural there will be the spiritual, where was death, eternal life. To such persons the preacher of

Christ cannot, practically, do better than to say with all the earnestness he possesses: O good men, but blind; O wise but ignorant seekers after the higher truth, begin to listen to the doctrine of God with the ear of the heart as well as the ear of the mind, or the mere outward ear! Come like the publican to the door of the temple, falling on your face and confessing your sins! Humbly submit to the truth that it may teach you! Do it, that it may bring you to life and make you wise unto salvation! Obey the things you truly know and can do! Forsake all and every known sin! Yield up a proud, untamed indifference to divine things, and love if you never loved! Give yourselves up to the Divine will, and cast yourselves unreservedly on the love of God, and He will send His renewing and enlightening Spirit, and conduct your minds out from under the cloud of fear and doubt, into the serene realm of a perfect faith in Christ, through whom we have access unto God, and the everlasting life which is in Him.

THE END.

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